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S.4.1829

HENRY AND ANTONIO;

OR,

THE PROSELYTES

OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE THIRD EDITION OF THE GERMAN OF

DR. C. G. BRETSCHNEIDER,

Chief Counsellor of the Consistory, and General Superintendent in Gotha,

BY THE

REV. M. MORGAN,

Chaplain to the British Residents, Gothenburg.

"Avolent, quantum volent, paleæ levis fidei quocunque afflatu tentationum; eo purior massa frumenti in horreo Domini reponetur."—*Tertullian, De Præscript. Chap. III.*

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. J. G. & F. RIVINGTON,

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD,

AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1829.

37.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

BIBLIOTH. BODLEIANA

TO THE

REV. GEORGE RICHARDS, D.D. F.A.S.

VICAR OF ST. MARTIN'S IN THE FIELDS,

AS A SMALL MARK OF SINCERE RESPECT AND GRATITUDE,

THE FOLLOWING TRANSLATION

IS INSCRIBED.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

THE design of this work is best expressed by its Contents. It aims not at attack, but at defence; and, only then becomes polemic, when defence could not be carried on, without retorting the weapons of the antagonist upon himself. This defence is chiefly conducted by a comparison of the precepts of Jesus and his Apostles with the doctrines which the Roman priesthood has immutably established at the Council of Trent, and in the Roman Catechism. This Catechism, and the decrees of that Council, as the established creed of the Roman Catholics, are, therefore, often quoted, to avoid incurring the reproach of giving a false representation of the Roman Church. The Council of Trent was held, but not without interruptions, from the year 1545 to 1563. The Roman Catholic priests, who were there assembled, publicly ratified those doctrines and rites, which the Protestants had abolished as abuses; they strictly separated themselves from the Protestant Church, and gave her

an eternal bill of divorce. The Roman Catechism was compiled at the command of Pope Pius the Vth; it was first published in Rome, in the year 1566; repeated editions were subsequently issued, and it gave a more accurate definition of many points, which had been omitted, or only slightly touched upon, at Trent. To place the Gospel of Rome, thus established, at the side of the Gospel of Nazareth, was the chief design of this publication; only a secondary place has, therefore, been assigned to historical grounds. But the defence of the Gospel of Nazareth against the Gospel of Rome, is fully justified by previous attacks. The Protestant Church is continually assailed in publications, pamphlets, and newspapers, French as well as German. Not only obscure scribblers, whom we may despise, because none will listen to them, raise a ceaseless accusation against that Church, which adheres to the Gospel of Nazareth alone; but periodicals, which find a place in the libraries of the higher ranks, are emphatic in similar charges; and, by new and old accusations, throw fire-brands wherever they will kindle, and where, if they do kindle, they produce the greatest mischief. Moreover, the Jesuits are revived; an order whose first aim is to attack and *extirpate* the Protestant Church; they work under divers forms, they pitch their camp, establish their posts, and endeavour to gain the ears of the higher ranks. The work of proselytism is carried on zealously and openly, and not without effect. Many are gained by ignoble means, and exchange the Gospel of Nazareth

for that of Rome, because they love the world, and honour in the eyes of men, more than God and truth. In these persons there is nothing lost. But others are won by false arguments, by apparent proofs, which they know not how to refute, and are, by apparent accusations, filled with suspicions against Protestantism. It is a duty incumbent on all, who still set a value on Protestant truth, to offer a guiding hand to these, to undeceive the deceived, to confirm the wavering. To be silent at a proper time, is prudent, at an improper time, folly. But to be silent, when duty commands us to speak, when truth, as it were, walks abroad, and challenges her friends to rise in her defence, when many an agitated and restless heart seeks light and support,—to be then silent is unconscientious. And who are more called upon to speak in such a case, than those who, of all others, ought, by their office, to know, to honour, and to defend the truth of the Gospel? It is to be hoped that the *form* of this work requires no justification. It is one in which the author has never made a previous attempt, and he, therefore, requests the kind indulgence of critics. It was chosen after many attempts, and after mature consideration, partly with the view of rendering the work more intelligible, and partly and principally, with the hope of procuring for it a more ready and extensive reception among the more refined classes of society, who do not apply themselves so easily to the perusal of polemical publications. And this aim seemed a sufficient compensation for the loss of a sys-

tematical connexion in individual parts of the work. There is, certainly, no reason to fear, that this form will be found unsuitable to the dignity of the subject, since the Founder of our religion has so frequently clothed his sentiments in the garb of narrative and dialogue. And no reader of the Bible is unacquainted with the parable of the Prodigal Son, who, after a long course of dissipation, returned to his father's house, penitent and reformed. The author's hopes and wishes, respecting the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, are expressed at the conclusion of the work. May they be accomplished! Moreover, he thought that it would not be unprofitable, if such a work as the present were given, on the day of their confirmation, to young persons of the higher and more cultivated classes of society, as a defence against the illusions of proselyte-makers.

B.

Gotha, April 7th, 1826.

PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

The demand for a second edition of this work comes too early to afford me an opportunity for making any alterations in its general plan and arrangement: besides, the voice of the public has approved of both. If I were to add what the reviewers of this publication in the Leipsig Literary Gazette (Literatur zeitung) recommend, I should be obliged to convert the book into a real novel, and to add a second volume to it; but this would be quite contrary to my object, although the character of the Roman Catholic physician, interwoven into the conclusion of the work, might have afforded materials for such a purpose. For this reason I also hesitated to give Henry, as some have wished, additional assistance in the defence of Roman Catholicism. *What* was said appeared to me of more consequence than *how many* said it; and it seemed equally immaterial whether the accusations against our Church were made by *one* or by *several:* the introduction of a second person appeared to me to lead further into polemics than suited my aim. But

although the general plan of the work remains unchanged, yet many improvements and several additions have been made in particular parts of it.

The additions in the Appendix from the earliest Fathers will not, it is presumed, be unacceptable to the reader.

Finally, I rejoice most sincerely that the work has not remained unnoticed. This induces me to hope that it will contribute, in some degree, to promote the knowledge of Christian truth and virtue in the great congregation of the Lord.

B.

Gotha, May 20, 1827.

PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

THE third edition of this work, with the exception of a few improvements in the style, remains the same as the second edition. Respect for the reception which this work has met with from the public seemed to demand that I should leave it unaltered; besides, I have hitherto found no reason to make any essential alterations. May the Lord further bless the use of this work!

B.

Gotha, June 30, 1828.

ADVERTISEMENT,

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

The following work was written under peculiar circumstances. The reigning Duke of Saxe Gotha, the head of an ancient Protestant family, in whose dominions the author holds the highest ecclesiastical dignity, was converted to Roman Catholicism in the year 1822. This was to the author a mortifying proof of the success of proselyte-makers. As Roman Catholics and Protestants enjoy, in Gotha, equal rights, he has had frequent opportunities of witnessing the machinations which the Jesuits employ to gain proselytes to their Church; he has seen under what various forms and disguises they insinuate themselves into all ranks of society. He has, therefore, thought it high time to raise a warning voice to the Protestant Church of Germany, against the undermining efforts of an order, whose first and last aim is the extirpation of Protestantism. With this view he published, in 1826, the following work, which is not grounded upon conjecture, but is the result of personal observation: and such was the success with which it was attended, that it passed through three editions in two years.

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HENRY AND ANTONIO.

CHAPTER I.

HENRY, the only son of a rich and highly-respected merchant at L. in Saxony, had gone to Italy to complete his studies as a painter. His return under his paternal roof was most ardently expected by his parents, and by his sister Wilhelmina, who was newly betrothed. But, with the sensation of joy at the prospect of seeing him, after an absence of three years, a feeling of sorrow, yea, even of melancholy, was mingled, which embittered, to the father at least, all the joy of the meeting.

Henry had become a *Roman Catholic* in Rome, and had informed his parents of this only a short time before his return. This step gave deep pain to his strictly Protestant father, who, under a lively impression of the superiority of his own Church, had always pronounced a severe judgment upon the Roman Catholic Church; and he was deeply affected that his only son had turned to a Church, which, according to his conviction, stands in complete opposition to the divine doctrine of Jesus and his apostles.

The family had, as yet, kept this step of the son a secret; but it was, the more frequently, the unpleasant topic of their confidential intercourse. Henry

had certainly written that he had become a Roman Catholic from conviction and force of conscience, and he had earnestly entreated his family not to include him in the number of those unworthy converts, who, for a benefice or a pension, for patronage or an advantageous marriage, change their creed as they do their dress: but this could not alleviate the grief of his father, who deeply felt, that a high partition-wall now separated him from the affections of his son.

"How can Henry," exclaimed he, painfully, "still retain confidence and esteem for us, since, according to the principles of his Church, he must consider us as heretics, children of Satan, and devoted to eternal damnation? I, at least, do not know how I could esteem or confide in persons whom I believed to be involved in the most dangerous errors, to be governed by Satan, and to be ordained by God to eternal damnation! And if," added he, violently, "he has made his confession according to the Jesuitical form, and has thereby *cursed* father, mother, and teacher, who have brought him up in heresy,—then, O then, I would *never* more wish to see my son!"

"That," answered his mother with emotion, "that Henry has certainly not done. I know my son too well. What! curse the mother who bore him, and nursed him at her breast?—that would be too dreadful—that my son has not done. He cannot have forgotten the words of Scripture, (Prov. xx. 20.) *Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.*"

"I also," replied his father, "will not believe any thing so dreadful of him."

"And I," said Wilhelmina, "cannot believe that the Roman Catholic Church demands any thing so unchristian from her proselytes."

"We might certainly think so," replied the father; "but a Church which condemns and curses all, without distinction, as heretics, acts, at least consistently, if she requires of her proselytes not to except even

their relations from this curse. It is certain that the Jesuits, at least, have imposed such a curse upon their proselytes, as it has been lately shewn by the publication of such confessions, which are proved to be genuine*. But that other Roman Catholic Priests, of a better description than the Jesuits, do the same, or that it is a general rule, I by no means believe. But every form of Catholic confession, which proselytes are obliged to make, may contain something whereby they renounce all spiritual communion with their parents. At least, the form of confession, which Charles Biester was obliged to make, by the direction of the Papal Nuncio, as late as the year 1812, when he became a Roman Catholic at Vienna, contains these express words: 'I swear never to relapse into these abjured errors, and never to grant assistance, council, favour, or relief, *to such as adhere to these errors* †.'

* The principal publication upon this subject is the authentic history of the so called professio fidei Tridentinæ, and of some other Roman Catholic confessions, by G. C. F. Mohnike. Greifswalde, 1822. 8vo.

In the form of confessions which was used in Hungary at the conversion of a Protestant to the Roman Catholic faith, and which in all probability originated with the Jesuits, it is said in conclusion—

"We aver that the Roman doctrine is the Catholic, pure, divine, blessed-making, ancient, and true doctrine, but that the Protestant doctrine is a false, erroneous, blasphemous, cursed, heretical, damnable, revolutionary, impious, invented, and imagined doctrine. We, therefore, curse (maledictos pronuntiamus) our parents who have brought us up in that heretical faith; we curse also those who have made us doubt the Roman Catholic faith. We curse the books which we have read, and which contain those heretical and blasphemous doctrines. We also curse all the works that we performed during our heretical belief, that they may not, at the last day, make us answerable for them before God. We swear besides, as long as a drop of blood remains in our body, to persecute that cursed Protestant doctrine, by all means in our power, *secretly* and *openly*, *violently* and *fraudulently*, (clam et aperte, violenter et fraudulenter), with word and deed, and even with *the sword*." (S. Mohnike, p. 91.)

† The words of the document of the Papal Nuncio are—"Testamur Carolum Biester, Lutheranæ sectæ, in qua natus et educatus fuerat, errores omnes impietatesque ejurasse, nec non in manibus nostris fidei professionem emisisse, cum juramento, de non relabendo in abjuratos errores, et non præstando opem, favorem, auxilium vel consilium eorum adhærentibus." The genuineness of this document has not been contradicted by the Roman Catholics.

How can Henry, if he has taken this oath, still shew friendship towards his heretical parents, or afford them aid, favour, and relief? Ah! I have lost my son—lost him for ever!"

The mother's tears, which here burst forth, and with which Wilhelmina mingled her's, interrupted the conversation; and were, as usual, the prelude to a long but melancholy silence, during which, nothing was heard but the mother's suppressed sighs, and the father's heavy step, as he violently and hastily strode up and down the room. "How is it possible," thought he to himself, "that Henry, a well-informed Protestant, could have suffered himself to have been led blindly by the blind? What poison of error must they have infused into him! Through what delusion must they have deceived him!"

What appeared inexplicable to the father had happened in a very simple and usual manner. Henry, when a boy, had been instructed by a very orthodox Lutheran schoolmaster; he had learnt perfectly the Lutheran catechism, and could answer every question concerning the mystery of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ; for he had learnt the Athanasian Creed by heart. The doctrines of original sin and of atonement, particularly, had been impressively inculcated upon him, as they are received in the Lutheran Church, namely—that all men, through Adam's fall, are become altogether sinful and depraved in reason and will, incapable of any good, and liable to eternal damnation; that this condemnation can only be averted through the blood of the Son of God, as an offering for sin, who, by his life and death, has offered satisfaction for all mankind; but that the only means of reconciliation consist in a firm belief in the power of this atonement; and that true repentance and true Christian virtue can proceed only from this belief.

The father believed his son most firmly grounded in the Protestant faith, through such genuine Lutheran

instruction. In treating of the duties of man, the master had never gone further than the Ten Commandments. Henry had learned little more of the discourses of Jesus and of the exhortations of the Apostles, than he learnt from the verses of Scripture contained in the national catechism. No reference whatever had been made to the history of the Christian Church, and nothing had been said of the difference between the Roman Catholic and Protestant confessions, except as far as regarded the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. The minister, who prepared Henry for confirmation, extended, rather good-naturedly than wisely, the duty of love, which we owe towards the persons of the erring, even to their errors, and declared it inhuman and intolerant to interfere with the differences between the Roman Catholic and Protestant creeds, and impressed upon the children, that nothing depended upon the differences of Churches, and that a Roman Catholic might be as good a Christian as a Protestant. At confirmation itself, although it decides the first admission to the Protestant Church communion, nothing was said concerning a pledge of fidelity towards the Protestant Church, and a confession of its distinguishing principles. The minister considered this rite only in the imperfect view of a pledge to virtue, of which there is no need, since every man is pledged to it by his own conscience. The idea that we owe duties to the religious community to which we belong, and that we dare not separate ourselves from it without urgent reasons, had, therefore, never entered Henry's mind.

Henry was now removed to a celebrated school, where religious instruction also was certainly given, but where there was no opportunity to improve the defect of his early education. The Rector, who delivered his instruction to the upper classes, thought that he did all that was required of him when he read the New Testament with his pupils. As he was only

a linguist, habit had led him to treat of the New Testament only in reference to grammar and language, on which he himself had written a large and learned work. Here he was in his element, and expatiated so copiously upon these points, that, during the four years that Henry listened to his instructions, he had happily proceeded from the first to the eighth chapter of St. Matthew. Henry had heard nothing, through this, of the peculiarities of Christianity or the Protestant Church.

He now went to the University. It was celebrated, highly esteemed, and every thing was taught there but a knowledge of religion, adapted to those who do not, immediately, study theology. Such lectures as might have opened the religious eyes of the students of law, physic, and philology, had never been held there since the foundation of the University! Henry, therefore, heard nothing but what he could hear as a philologist, viz. *philosophy*. The man who lectured upon this *science* of *science* was celebrated and orthodox also, and had on this account been presented by the pious curators of the University, in preference to many others, with the professorship of philosophy. He belonged to the school of SCHELLING*. Henry was, therefore, not a little astonished, when he heard demonstrated, in a philosophical manner, from the nature of the Absolute, all that the instructor of his youth had impressed upon him, concerning the Trinity, both natures of Christ, hereditary sin, by which the whole human race has apostatized from God, and has become liable to eternal condemnation; concerning the necessity of atonement by a God-man; and that Christianity is nothing else but an institution of expiation.

* Schelling is a disciple of Hichte, and is now secretary of the Royal Academy of Belle Lettres at Munich. He has established a new system of philosophy, entitled the Philosophy of the Absolute. He has chosen his Terminology in an arbitrary manner, and often attaches his own ideas to terms, which, in common language, have a very different meaning. His philosophy has, therefore, been misunderstood even by his own pupils.

The Professor did, certainly, not mean it as it sounded to the ear. When he spoke of God, he only meant the Absolute; when he discoursed of the union of the Godhead with manhood, he only understood the idea of the Absolute in the human brain; when he lamented the great apostacy of man through hereditary sin, he only meant apostacy from the Absolute Essence, which had taken place through the arrogance of man in wishing to become an individual, a person in the Absolute; and when he praised the atonement, he only intended man's renunciation of his own personality. But all this was unintelligible to the pupil. Henry thought that, when the Professor spoke of God, of original and hereditary sin, of atonement, and the like, he could mean nothing else by these terms but what his old instructor had intended by them. He certainly did not understand how all this harmonised with philosophy. But he only admired it the more, and believed the more firmly, that a most excellent kernel must be concealed in the nut, whose shell was too hard only for his youthful tooth. And the more his old teacher had impressed upon him the falsely translated words of the Lutheran Bible, *that we should bring into captivity reason to the obedience of faith**, the more exalted human reason appeared in his present instructor, that it could, notwithstanding its corruption, still attain to the divine mysteries, and demonstrate so clearly their necessity.

This instruction was not without fruit. Henry was morally disposed when he left his father's house, but he now became a rigid advocate for the Lutheran doctrines of hereditary sin, satisfaction, and faith, and thought that no man could be a Christian, or have any religion at all, who did not adhere firmly to these doctrines.

As the preachers of the town did not enter into

* 2 Cor. x. 5. More correctly rendered in most English translations, and in that of Van Ess in German, "Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

this system of his instructor, and did not, in their discourses, treat of original sin before all consciousness, and the guilt of our apostacy from God; or, at least, did not expatiate upon these subjects according to Henry's views, he repaired rather to a chapel of the Moravians that was in the town, where their melodious singing and extatic devotion powerfully attracted him.

Original sin, satisfaction, and saving faith, were the foundation of all he heard and saw there. But it was not clear to him, or it was good-naturedly dealt-looked by him, that they attached to these any other ideas to these terms than those which were contained in the philosophy of the Absolute. He often mentioned, in his letters to his father, the satisfaction which he felt in this chapel. His father had, certainly, many objections to the Moravians, which he did not conceal from his son; but he was glad to find him religiously disposed, and he thought his inclinations towards the Moravians a sufficient safe-guard against that mode of thinking, which a rigid advocate for orthodoxy had rendered suspicious to him, under the name of Rationalism; as capable of undermining and destroying *Biblical* Christianity, on which every good Christian ought immoveably to rest.

The natural consequence of this direction of Henry's mind was, that he became more inclined to melancholy and religious anxiety than to the cheerfulness of a virtuous life. The idea, ever present to his mind, that the whole human race has apostatized from God, and can only be preserved from eternal damnation through the mediation of a God-man, and that all must inevitably sink into the gulf of perdition who do not cling, with a firm faith, to this Mediator, made him anxious and melancholy: the reflection that the world is nothing but a sinful opposition to God, threw a gloomy shade over all nature, and made him suspect even the innocent emotion of natural impulse.

With this disposition of mind, it was natural that

he should not shrink from, arising from the study of the languages and literature of the heathen world; from which, especially from the monuments of the Grecian nation, he imbibed a more cheerful and lively spirit, which appeared to him as the spirit of the sinful world, that must be mortified, if he would qualify himself for the favour of God and everlasting life.

This induced him, at the conclusion of his academical career, to relinquish profane literature, and to devote himself exclusively to painting, which he had hitherto followed only as a secondary pursuit. His father laid no restraint upon him, and Henry, in the twenty-fifth year of his age, travelled to Italy, there to lay a deeper foundation in the art, to which he had now devoted himself.

CHAPTER II.

A new world opened to his view, which, till then, he had only known by name,—the Roman Catholic world. He heard high mass, he saw consecrations of bishops, pilgrimages, images of saints, bishops in princely splendour, cardinals; he saw the Pope conferring his blessing on a kneeling multitude; he was astonished at what he beheld, but all was beyond his comprehension; the meaning of these rites and ceremonies, and the religious conceptions on which they were founded, had never been explained to him. A feeling of curiosity to discover their signification, led him often into Roman Catholic Churches. The number of the faithful who were there assembled, their silent prayers, their devout expressions, attracted his attention, and he frequently felt himself edified by such a scene. Not to appear singular as a stranger, he followed the example of others; he knelt with them, he made the sign of the cross, and was soon so well versed in the external ceremonials, that he could no longer be distinguished from a Roman Catholic. He found the art, to which he had devoted himself, every where in the closest union with religion. All the Churches were adorned with beautiful paintings, and the images of the Holy Virgin, which the pencils of the artists had sought to portray in all the *beau ideal* of chaste loveliness, were always the most prominent.

All this had no dangerous influence on his creed, concerning which, to his astonishment, he had scarcely

been interrogated. But things soon assumed a different aspect. On the paintings, which he contemplated and copied, much referring to the history of saints and legends was almost incomprehensible to him, and he was obliged to beg for explanations, which were readily and zealously given. By these means he obtained a more accurate knowledge of the historical traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and their connexion with her doctrines, rites, and regulations. Although much of what he heard in explanation of the paintings and images appeared to him incredible and strange, and much relating to the legends of saints, shocked his unbiassed mind, he began, however, to become gradually accustomed to their inconsistencies. The firm assurance with which all that was incredible was again and again related to him, and represented as circumstances of which no human being could entertain a doubt, did not fail to produce the usual effect upon Henry. Belief, like unbelief, is contagious. If we constantly hear an opinion always pronounced with firm conviction, we may at length become inclined to consider it as true, and to distrust our own judgment.

This disposition was strengthened in Henry by his taste for the fine arts, which had already been awakened and fostered in Germany, by the inexhaustible effusions on paintings and works of art, with which the periodicals there overflow. Even that, which his reason inwardly rejected, received a charm from his favourite art; by means of which, aided by imagination and sensibility, it insinuated itself into his mind. Henry became more and more ready to give a sublime interpretation even to the most marvellous tale, or to refer it to a "*nameless feeling*."

While in matters of religion he resigned himself to a poetical feeling, which valued every object, not according to its intrinsic truth, but its fitness to the imagination, he, at the same time, acquired a frame of mind which, beyond any other, prepared him for the

step which he was about to take. That dejection, and that religious disquietude, which had chased him from the cheerful precincts of Greek and Roman literature, did not forsake him in Italy, but were nourished by his study of the fine arts. The combats of the saints which he copied, were nothing but combats with what he called the world, and conquests over its allurements; he felt that much was wanting in him to such strength of faith, such contempt of the world; he became anxious concerning his acceptance with God, and his eternal salvation. His conscience could, certainly, not reproach him with any crime; but he was conscious that he was a man, under the influence of original sin, and that all his good works, if they did not proceed from faith in the atoning death of Christ, were but specious sins, which could not be acceptable to God; he knew that man is justified before God only through faith in the merits of Christ, and that salvation depends solely upon this faith. But concerning this faith he began to entertain a *doubt*. It appeared as if his trust in the merits of Christ no longer possessed the requisite degree of faith, but for this degree he knew no criterion which he might adopt as a standard. He did not doubt in the truth of the doctrine; on the contrary, he adhered to it more firmly than ever; but he became doubtful, whether he possessed the true confidence, the true measure of faith; for days, yea weeks, elapsed, during which this "alone saving faith" slumbered in his breast, and even when awakened, it was easily enfeebled and supplanted by the world and its pursuits; and it frequently appeared to him, that his faith in the atonement could only then be true, if he were able to comprehend the whole process of grace; that is, if he could conceive how the voluntary sacrifice of a God-man could be an all-sufficient satisfaction for the original and actual sins of mankind. But this mystery he could never fully comprehend. In such a situation an indescribable anxiety with regard to his salvation overpowered

him; and he often bitterly lamented that such misery and condemnation had been entailed upon mankind through Adam and Eve. He mentioned these scruples to some of his Protestant fellow-artists who resided in Rome, but these had no belief in original sin and its condemnation, and, as he considered them as unbelievers, he could obtain no consolation from them. A divine of his own creed was no where to be met with; he, therefore, remained solitary and deserted, involved in anxiety and doubt. But this did not long continue; he became acquainted with a secular priest, who had formerly been in Saxony. They easily became friends, as Rossi (this was his name) could converse with him about his beloved native country. Rossi had frequently explained legends to him, on which some painting or other was founded; and it was quite natural that a Roman Catholic priest should relate the legends of saints and martyrs as authentic facts. Henry could not justly take offence at this. Rossi had never, by a single word, mentioned the Protestant faith; nay, he appeared not even to suspect that Henry was a Protestant, although he knew this perfectly well. He introduced the subject of religion only gradually, and very cautiously, into his conversation, and drew out the most favourable views of Catholicism in detached expressions, on which he appeared to lay no weight. At first Henry did not contradict him, because he feared to give pain to his friend; but this fear gradually subsided, and Henry opposed to his arguments whatever he happened to know, which was but very little, as he had never received any instruction on the distinction between the two creeds. Rossi had waited for this opposition, which presented him with an opportunity, when, without appearing officious, he might impart to his inexperienced friend the views of Roman Catholicism, and lay before him all the arguments which might operate most powerfully on his imperfect knowledge of the subject. The seeds remained not without fruit. Henry felt more and more that his

knowledge could not stand its ground against the well-founded arguments of his friend; he was obliged to give way to one point after the other, and he, at length, began to think that he had only in Rome found the True Church. The priest soon penetrated his artless mind, and, for the first time, dropped a few words on a change of creed, to which an unsought occasion was given by the late conversion of a Protestant artist in Rome, who had wished to obtain the patronage of a cardinal. It was not difficult to convince Henry, that where gross error had existed, change of faith became a matter of conscience. This was the foundation on which Rossi continued to build. He ventured now to lament that his friend was so far removed from the true Church, and to intimate to him, the delight with which the possibility of Henry's return to its bosom would inspire him, and, finally, to express this idea as the fondest wish of his heart.

Although Henry, in his conversations with his friend, had not been able to dispute the superiority of the Roman Catholic Church, yet the importance of the step to which Rossi invited him, caused him to feel doubt and hesitation. But even these subsided, the longer he dwelt on a change of faith. He had once confided to his friend, how he was agitated by doubts whether he possessed sufficient faith in the merits of Christ, to be sure of his justification and salvation. Rossi, far from removing this doubt, increased it, by remarking, that this uniform strength of faith was certainly a very dubious point, as the human heart is not always the same, and even a doubt, which the very best intentions could not prevent, might destroy all confidence, and with it all the saving power of faith. "We, Roman Catholics, certainly," added he, as if accidentally, "cannot be agitated by such doubts; as we, even under the most decided doubts, remain perfectly secure of our salvation." Whence this security proceeded, he did not explain, till Henry himself, on the following day, begged him for an explanation.

"We Roman Catholics," observed Rossi, "possess all that is good and Christian in common with the Protestants, for them here received it from us, and have transferred it to their Church. We, like you, possess the Holy Scriptures, and regard them as the first source of all Christian knowledge, and it is the Catholic Church, upon whose testimony you consider the sacred writings, and particularly the New Testament, as genuine. You possess the Apostolic, the Nicean, and the Athanasian Creeds; we also, and you have received them from us. You have Baptism and the Lord's Supper; we also. You teach the Mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God; you believe in Original Sin, the condemnation of all mankind proceeding from thence, and in the repeal of this condemnation through the all-sufficient Sacrifice of a God-man; and this is also our doctrine. All, therefore, that you possess, we have also; but we have more, that is wanting to you; and because you have rejected this, you are not secure of your salvation. The Catholic Church, as a tender mother of the faithful, and mindful of the frailty of man, has made the efficacy of expiatory rites not dependant on the faith of the layman, (which, as you yourself lament, is not to be relied on,) but upon the power of the priest, and the nature of the expiatory rite itself, which works out our salvation, *ex opere operato*, as we say; that is, through the mere performance of the rite; it matters not whether the Christian accompanies it with true faith or not. The Catholic need not, therefore, torment himself with the question, whether he possess sufficient faith, or the true faith, to obtain the grace of God. It suffices that the priest absolves, and celebrates mass for him. For the same reason, the Roman Catholic Church has not made reconciliation with God dependant on the *internal act of faith*, but on external rites, which, if duly performed, secure pardon to the sinner. You Protestants have only the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, of which you partake two or three times a

year; we have the daily celebration of mass for all sins; we have confession and absolution, indulgences, a catalogue of good works, such as fasting, the angelic salutation, pilgrimages, sanctuaries peculiarly endowed with the power of remitting sins. The Catholic Christian lives, therefore, in blessed peace and security with regard to his eternal salvation. Whatever scruples of faith he may entertain, whatever sins he may commit, if he only avails himself of confession, mass, and absolution, they do not endanger his salvation. The human heart is frail and unstable in faith and virtue; it is, therefore, necessary to ground salvation on a firmer and more immutable basis than internal faith, and thus to come to the aid of frailty. For this frailty, the Protestants have nothing, we every thing."

In this manner Rossi endeavoured to persuade his friend that he would become both happy and tranquil, if he availed himself of the means of expiation which the Catholic Church offers to the Christian. When this idea had taken root in Henry's mind, Rossi went still further, and began to prove to his friend, that the Protestant Church consists of nothing but confusion, insecurity, unbelief, and error; that she is not the True Church, has no real priesthood, and no efficacious sacraments. It was easy to persuade Henry of this, as he had already begun to consider the Roman Catholic as the only True Church. It was a natural consequence, which Henry could the less resist, as he had hitherto been perfectly unacquainted with the subject, and had never heard the decisive arguments against these assertions, which the older Protestant divines have so ably established. Convinced, at length, that the Roman Catholic Church is the only True Church, which alone can, through the power of her expiatory rites, secure acceptance with God, Henry, six months previous to his return to Saxony, deposited his Catholic confession of faith in Rossi's hands.

CHAPTER III.

His wrote of this immediately to his father, with all the warmth of a new convert, and observed, that this step would certainly obtain his approbation, as soon as he should personally lay before him the grounds of his conversion. On so important a step, Henry ought certainly to have consulted the opinion of his father, or of some intelligent friend. But Rossi urgently dissuaded him from this, and represented to him that it would only lead to opposition on the part of his parents, which might impede his admission into the True Church, which alone was capable of conferring salvation. He did, as many do, who separate themselves from our communion,—he sought the advice of an intelligent person. He had such confidence in his own penetration, that he thought he stood in no need of the council of others. Rossi had so ably explained to him the grounds of his conversion, that he believed himself able to justify this step to any person whatever; and he even conceived the hope of being able to lead his parents to the bosom of the True Church.

He resigned himself to this hope the more easily, as his father, in his answer, did not express any disapprobation. His father, in his letter, only urged his immediate return, and Henry instantly complied with this injunction, although Rossi earnestly dissuaded him from it, and even intimated, that disobedience in an affair relating to his eternal salvation, was meritorious. Concerning his conversion, his father only

made this short observation, that they would discuss the subject, orally, at home, and that he hoped Henry had not become a Roman Catholic from impure motives. As Henry was not conscious of this, he set out on his return in good spirits.

These spirits continued as long as the air of Italy breathed around him, but when, from the summit of the Alps, he again looked down upon the sky of Germany, it seemed as if his courage would fail him, and the further he continued his journey, the more depressed he became. Displeased with himself, that his heart should misgive him, when his understanding could not reproach him, he recapitulated all the arguments by which Rossi had made him a conscientious Catholic, and thus endeavoured to recover sufficient confidence to allay the agitation of his mind. He succeeded for a time, but his palpitation of heart returned, the nearer he approached home; and the only effectual ground of tranquillity which he finally found, was the consciousness that he was so sincerely beloved by his parents, that he might still hope for their indulgence, although he might not be able to justify his change of creed to them. To arm himself against the objections which he had reason to expect at home, he staid a week at Frankfort-on-the-Maine, and availed himself of this respite to commit to writing the grounds of his conversion, which were as many accusations against the Protestant Church. He could, by this means, view his arguments in connexion, and have them readily at hand.

His arrival was expected at his father's house with an unpleasant constraint. His family had not, like him, to reproach themselves with weakness and precipitation, but they were agitated by a feeling of distrust towards the proselyte, and of painful uncertainty, lest his character had altered with his change of faith, and lest their former ties of affection had been severed.

While Henry remained at Frankfort to compose

himself, another opponent arose at his side, whom he had not in the least anticipated. Shortly before his departure from Rome, he had met with a young man of four and twenty, who had recommended himself to him by a prepossessing exterior, a clear and sound understanding, and a character well established for great probity. *Antonio* (this was his name) was by birth a Neapolitan, and had been educated, as an orphan, in a convent at Naples. As he was clever and industrious, he had gained much knowledge, considering the advantages which he had enjoyed; and these acquirements, together with his pleasing appearance, had attracted the notice of a Bavarian nobleman, whom he accompanied on several journeys, and finally to Rome. Here Henry became acquainted with him, made him, on the death of his patron, his companion, and determined to take him with him to Germany, as he understood the German language pretty well. Henry soon became much attached to him, and was delighted to promote his improvement to the utmost of his power. He had a small collection of books, of which Antonio had the use, and he chiefly devoted himself to German works, that he might become better versed in this language. After receiving a little assistance from Henry, Antonio was soon able to understand a German author, with whom he was particularly fond of historical and geographical works, and, with the aid of a retentive memory, he soon made himself master of their contents. Henry had not yet determined for what he intended him in Germany, but he hoped to obtain a respectable situation for him, as Antonio took with him several strong recommendations to Roman Catholic ecclesiastics in Germany.

Of religion, Antonio knew no more than his instructors, the monks of Naples, had taught him. He had read the Roman Catechism, and an Italian translation of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and was thus, for a layman, a learned Catholic. The monks

had done all in their power to render him a good Catholic, and he believed that no man could be a good Christian, who did not hear mass, observe the fasts religiously, repeat the Pater Noster, apply for the priest's absolution, and humbly believe all prescribed to him by the Church. His teachers had particularly impressed him with such an extreme horror for all heresy, that he always felt uneasy when he met with a heretic at Rome; that God regards heretics with horror and detestation, that they are under the dominion of Satan, and are ordained, together with him, to eternal damnation, was to him the most certain of all truths. His imagination had therefore formed a strange idea of heretical countries, where he thought "*faith must cease, and the kingdom of Satan commence.*" He was, therefore, at first doubtful whether he should go to heretical Saxony, and only took courage for the journey when he heard that there existed there Catholic congregations and ecclesiastics, who were zealous for the extension of the true faith: and he conceived the hope, from some observations of Henry, that he might, perhaps, make his fortune there.

Whilst they travelled among the Alps, Antonio was so absorbed in the grandeur of the surrounding scenery, that he was perfectly unconscious that he had already, at Zurich, entered an heretical country. He understood but very little of the German dialect spoken there; but he admired the beauty of the country, and its high state of cultivation; and his admiration increased still more when they proceeded through the vale of the Neckar, down towards Stuttgard, Karlsruhe, and Heidelberg. It had, however, struck him, that in this delightful country he had no where seen a monk, and seldom a priest, whom he had met almost at every step in Rome and Naples. He expressed his astonishment to Henry, but betrayed evident embarrassment upon being informed that this was an heretical country. Henry was too much occupied with his own feelings to notice the confusion of his com-

passion. But as the country still continued beautiful from Heidelberg to Frankfort, and the inhabitants appeared happy and moral, although there were no priests, monks, images of saints, and convents to be seen, Antonio's knowledge of divinity could not solve this striking spectacle, and he no longer knew in what light to consider the relation in which God stood to these reprobate heretics. He resolved to rouse Henry from the sullen silence, which was not natural to him, and to open his heart to him.

"You are a good Catholic," said he, "and cannot doubt that only Catholic Christians can be saved, and that heretics will be damned. These have no true faith, no proper confessions, no proper sacraments, and their ministers cannot duly absolve: they reject the vicegerent of God and Christ, the Holy Father, and are therefore rebels against God and Christ. They are fallen into the hands of the devil, and are led by him to all errors and wickedness, for heresy is the brother of all crimes. All this is perfectly certain; it is taught by the Holy Church, which cannot err. I find, however, these heretical countries highly blessed by God, and much better cultivated and peopled than the dominions of the Holy Father. How can God so favour these reprobates? But it is still more astonishing to me that such good order, good morals, public security, industry, and trade, reign in this country, where heresy rages. There are no beggars to be seen here, while with us every street is crowded with them; there is nothing heard here of robberies and stabbing, which with us are very common. Oh tell me, how is this possible? This blockhead perceives that so false and wicked faith reigns in this country, and yet that the inhabitants are virtuous; while with me the faith is good, but the people are not particularly so. If I were not a good Catholic I might be tempted to believe that these people had also a religion, and that it was no worse than ours."

Henry looked with astonishment at his companion:

his observations came upon him quite unexpectedly, as Antonio had hitherto concealed his thoughts from him; but they referred to a point on which Henry had not reflected, and he was therefore unable to give a ready answer. "God shews favour to the erring," stammered he at length, considerably embarrassed, "to allow them time and opportunity for repentance." He himself felt perfectly well the insufficiency of this reply, and he almost trembled at the thought what satisfactory answer she could give to his father if he should question him in the same manner. He introduced these questions of Antonio into the list of his present enquiries, but the more he reflected upon the subject the less satisfactory was the answer.

Antonio had certainly departed with the answer he had received, but he was by no means satisfied; this double contradiction remained fixed in his mind,—"Heresy is an abomination before God, and heretics are damned, yet God blesses them; they are the children of Satan, and are involved in errors fatal to the soul, and yet they are moral, upright, and respectable."—Agitated by these doubts, Antonio chanced to pass by one of the churches of Frankfort, where the bells were ringing for Sunday service, and he summoned courage to follow the example of the multitude, and to enter an heretical church. His confessor had certainly, before his departure from Rome, prohibited this to him as a great sin; but a desire to see the worship of heretics proved a temptation too strong to be resisted, and he hoped at the next confession, when he intended to confess this sin as a good Catholic, to obtain absolution from it, though he might be subjected to certain penances.

Antonio entered with a fearful countenance, as one who is about to do something wrong; there was no consecrated water, which is so powerful to guard the faithful from evil spirits, and no person on entering could avail himself of this potent safeguard of the Roman Catholic Church. "Poor souls!" (thought An-

tonio,) "how can they escape the attacks of Satan without consecrated water!" He looked round the walls and pillars, but no image of a saint or of the Holy Virgin was to be seen. "Ah poor creatures!" (sighed he again,) "to whom can they pray, since they have neither saints nor the Holy Virgin?" He was also surprised that none of those who entered paid adoration to the altar, but as he advanced nearer he saw clearly that there was no Host. "Poor souls!" (thought he again,) "how can they obtain grace since they have no offering!" He already began to repent that he had entered a Church which had neither consecrated water, images, nor the host; and, through the want of these, he considered the congregation but little distinguished from heathens. In the mean time service began, and the powerful singing of the whole congregation, which he heard for the first time, and the beauty of the melody arrested his attention. Of the portions of Scripture that were read he understood nothing, but the next hymn which the congregation sang made a deeper impression on his mind than the tones of the eunuchs in the Papal chapel, and he could not refuse the friendly offer of a neighbour, who offered him a Psalm-Book: he read, and the congregation sang

The man who walks in virtue's ways,
Who never from her precincts strays,
Is bless'd by Heav'n above;
His path is pleasing to the Lord,
To Him who e'er he has ador'd,
With reverence and love.

For God our ev'ry thought does know,
The motives whence our actions flow
Before His throne appear:
And faith, if not by virtue crown'd,
To Him is but an empty sound,
From which He turns His ear.

"Is this true?" thought Antonio, "or have the heretics only invented these opinions to console themselves for not having the true faith?"

He was soon to hear more upon this subject: the sermon began, and treated upon the following point—that no man who is wanting in true Christian virtue can be saved, or have any title to salvation, however orthodox he may be, or however zealous in his external devotions. Antonio was all attention, and the longer he listened the more was his attention rivetted. The words of the text made a still deeper impression upon him than the discourse of the minister; they were taken from the Gospel of the eighth Sunday after Trinity, (Matt. vii. 15—23.) "*The words of the wise,*" says Solomon, "*are as goads and as nails,*" and so Antonio felt the words of the text, and he thought he would here at length obtain a complete solution of his late scruple, why so many blessings and so much Christian virtue are to be found in heretical countries.

The Saviour says, (thus Antonio's ideas developed themselves gradually in his mind) the external sheep's clothing does not make the true prophet; consequently, the robe does not make the true bishop, nor the rosary, the fasts, and hearing of masses, the true Christian. *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* Here Antonio remembered an acquaintance of his, who was patronised by a Neapolitan Count, and who had been commissioned by him to stab another nobleman. When Antonio had endeavoured to dissuade him from it, he had only answered, "The priest has already twice absolved me from such a crime; and if the same priest will not do it the third time, another will." That appeared to Antonio a very corrupt fruit, which pointed to the corrupt tree that had borne it. Whilst he reflected whether the priest has, really, the power to cancel the guilt of murder by absolution, the words of the 19th verse thundered in his ears: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.* "Is there no exception to this?" thought Antonio. "Is it not unless the priest, or a Papal indulgence absolve him?" He thought

this clause would follow; but he heard nothing of it. The preacher rather insisted, from this passage, upon the *unconditional* necessity of a Christian life, in order to obtain salvation.

The following words of the text touched him still more deeply: *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* "So," said Antonio to himself, "to be a true Christian, it is not enough that a man openly acknowledge Jesus as Lord, and make the Christian confession of faith; it is not enough that he perform miracles. If this be not sufficient, then, by all the saints! it is not enough for the Roman Catholic Church, to constitute her as the true Church, that she alone has the true confession of faith; that miracles shall still continue in her; and that her priests are able, through consecrated water and benedictions, to banish evil spirits. If this be not enough, the Protestants also, since they acknowledge Jesus as their Lord, may enter into the kingdom of heaven, if they live as religious Christians."

Full of these thoughts, Antonio returned home; and, as Henry was gone out, he asked the host if he had a Bible, and could tell him the text of to-day's sermon. Antonio wished to see if the preacher had not omitted any thing; for he thought he must find there also, that confessions, absolutions, and rosaries, are necessary to salvation; and that indulgences, and the putting on of the raiment of those orders of monks who afflict themselves with penances, screen the sinner from condemnation; but he found absolutely nothing but what the preacher had read. "Is there nothing omitted in this translation?" inquired

he of the host, as he returned him the Bible. The host, observing with whom he had to do, made him no answer, but fetched a small book, and gave it to Antonio with these words: "This is a translation of the Bible by a *Roman Catholic* Ecclesiastic." It was the New Testament, translated by the Roman Catholic Priest, *Van Ess*. Antonio found here also the same words, and no more. "And so," thought he, with a sort of reluctance, "the heretical preacher was right. Right! how can that be? The Church teaches differently; and she cannot err! The preacher has, however, the words of the Saviour on his side. Which are more infallible, the words of the Saviour or the decisions of the Church? Can the latter be infallible, since she has, originally, derived all her doctrines and infallibility from Christ?

Antonio saw no solution of this point. He hoped, however, to discover it, when he had read more in the New Testament; and the obliging host requested his acceptance of the book which seemed to afford him so much pleasure. He received it very gratefully, but immediately reproached himself; as it occurred to him, that only heretics are permitted so free a use of the Bible, and that the holy father had only lately declared it as highly pernicious for the laity to read the Bible in their native tongue. But when he reflected that the author of this translation was a Catholic Priest, he took courage to look farther into it; and every scruple entirely vanished when he observed, at the bottom of the title-page, the episcopal approbation of this translation. Antonio now read this Testament with extreme eagerness; and he had no interruption, as Henry was writing all day in his room. When they left Frankfort, he had already read the New Testament twice through. The case was the same with him as it was with Luther when he first read the Bible at Erfurt. He found much that was new to him, but he could discover no trace of many doctrines which had been represented to him as old,

and which the Roman Catholics strictly retained, as constituting essential parts of Christianity, but of which he found absolutely nothing. Old and new ideas were now mixed together in his mind, and he became much perturbed. In this state of agitation, when the old ideas preponderated, he sometimes muttered to himself, "It is, however, dangerous for a good Catholic to travel through heretical countries." At another time, when the new ideas (which he had formed from all he saw, heard, and read) prevailed, he owned, with a sensation of joy, that he would become quite a different Christian if he could confide in these new ideas, and resign himself to their guidance. As he was any thing but reserved, he communicated, with his usual liveliness and fluency, all his thoughts to Henry; but the short monosyllabic answers which he received, made him less communicative. These answers filled him with uneasiness: this much he saw clearly, that Henry had some cause of grief; and he requested to be allowed to participate in whatever oppressed him, as his approach towards home ought to render him cheerful. Henry made no answer; and Antonio did not repeat his inquiries.

CHAPTER IV.

As Henry was stopping at a small town, about twenty miles from L. he was unexpectedly met by his mother and sister, who embraced him with tears of joy. Their unfeigned expressions of unaltered affection dispelled the uneasiness which had hitherto oppressed his mind. He felt that they still regarded him in the light of a son and brother, and that his change of faith had not cooled their affection. He now gained courage to meet his father, although he was struck that he had not accompanied his mother and sister. The excuses of his kind mother, that business had prevented him, were only a pretext. He could no more rejoice in his son; he could not entirely suppress his displeasure; and he wished to make his son *feel*, that he had estranged himself from his heart: therefore, he did not go to meet him. Henry expected this; and his suspicion acquired certainty, when he found, that, after the first effusions of joy had subsided, the conversation between him and his mother became languid and constrained; which was very painful to both. It was evident, that there existed a point between them which required an explanation, but which each dreaded to touch. But true affection cannot endure such constraint; explanations ensued, and Henry tranquillized his mother by assuring her, that he was still the same affectionate and dutiful son, and by promising her, that he would faithfully and honestly lay before his father all the grounds of his change of faith, which would convince

him, that neither fanaticism nor an inclination to mysticism, nor any impure motive, had led him to the Roman Catholic Church; but, on the contrary, well-weighed and rational grounds, which he hoped would appear justifiable to his father. This his mother scarcely expected; but she consoled her son by the assurance, that much would be gained if his father could only be convinced, that he had acted from upright motives. Henry entered L. in revived spirits, and threw himself into the arms of his beloved father, who received him with friendly gravity. The conversation, during the first hours, referred only to the occurrences of the journey, and the changes which had taken place in the country, during Henry's absence; but in the evening, when the family were assembled in their domestic circle, Henry himself, who gained more courage in the presence of his kind father than he had felt at a distance, led the conversation to his change of creed.

"You will, my dear father," said he, "regard your son with distrust, because he has turned from the Protestant to the Roman Catholic Church: you are, perhaps, displeased with me, and I cannot complain of your displeasure, for I know your sentiments. I am anxious faithfully to represent all that has passed in my mind; and I hope that you will listen to me with indulgence, that every thing on this subject may be clearly understood between us.

Father. I expect such an explanation from you, my dear Henry, and I am glad that you offer it to me, because I would have required it from you. I do not conceal from you, (he warmly added), that your step has raised a partition-wall between you and me, which must be removed, before our hearts can be united, as they used to be.

Henry. I hope I shall succeed in reconciling you to me, if you will hear me with kindness, and judge me with impartiality.

Father. You may expect both from me; and the

more so, as we shall never converse on this subject except in the presence of your mother and sister, who have as great a claim upon your candour as I have.

Henry. You will certainly not include all those who pass from one Christian profession of faith to another, in a general censure. I know it is often laid down as a maxim, that we are not permitted to change our creed; as every man ought to adhere to the Church in which he has been born and educated, and to which, at his confirmation, he has pledged himself to remain faithful. But I never could approve of this maxim, when carried to such an extent. I confess that we owe the same obligations to the Church to which we belong, as to the country in which we are born and educated. Church and State are, to every man, the faithful friends of his childhood and youth, who fostered and cherished him, and to whom he owes gratitude and fidelity. None but the unfeeling, the ignorant, or wicked, will therefore renounce their Church from mere selfish motives. But still, it cannot be thence inferred, that we ought, under all circumstances, to continue in the Church in which we are bred; for we are all sacredly pledged to truth in the words of our Saviour: *He who is of the truth heareth my voice.* If, therefore, my Church has departed from truth, and I find that another Church faithfully adheres to it, I have every reason to recede from mine to the better Church. For grateful, as every man must be, to his Church, for the early precepts it has inculcated upon him, yet it cannot be denied, that education attaches us to our Church without our own choice, and that we are, in general, conscious of no reasons why we belong to it; and that, at our confirmation, we are still in spiritual minority, and know not what we do. And shall a promise, which we give as minors, bind us for ever? bind us even then, when we are convinced that we have lived in error? Shall we continue in a path which we

know to be wrong, merely because we entered it as children, and have pursued it till manhood?

Mother. But if we have prospered in this path; if millions find their happiness in it; if we see parents and friends, whose understanding we respect, treading this path with confidence—

Henry. You think, my dear mother, that I am speaking of the justice of a transition from the Protestant to the Catholic Church. But I do not speak here of secession from one *good* Church to another, but of the propriety of a change of creed in general; and what I mean, regards also the Catholic who joins the Protestant Church.

Father. So it does, my dear. A change of creed, in general, can by no means be considered as inadmissible and immoral; and the assertion, that every honest man must hold fast to his Church, is decidedly false. If this were admitted, Jesus and the Apostles ought not to have renounced Judaism, the first Christians should not have detached themselves from idolatry, nor our German ancestors have turned from the worship of Wodin to the adoration of the true God, nor our fathers, three hundred years ago, have separated from the Roman Church. Abraham departed from his native land because it was idolatrous, left his father's house, and served the Lord who had created heaven and earth, in a land of strangers. Truth is so sacred, that we must never, least of all in matters of religion, sacrifice it to casual circumstances.

Wilhelmina. Your examples, father, with the exception of one only, apply to transitions from a perfectly false religion, as heathenism, or a corrupted one, as Judaism, to the true Church, or Christianity, and cannot, as it appears to me, strictly be applied to a secession from one Christian Church to another. Here each Church, namely, the Protestant and the Roman Catholic, acknowledges Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the same Sacred Writings, the same Christ, the same God. But if both Churches possess

the essential parts of Christianity, any other distinctions appear not to justify the renunciation of one or the other Church, but every man ought to adhere to the Church to which he has pledged his fidelity. You yourself have taught me, that a wife, if she find not all perfection in the man whom she has chosen for her husband, or if she discover unexpected faults in him, and see in other men more amiable qualities, is still not justified to require a separation, but must act faithfully towards her husband, bear with his faults, and only look to his virtues. I should think that every one stands in the same relationship to his Church as a wife does to her husband. Each Church has defects, each has advantages; each can, therefore, claim fidelity.

Father. I wish, Wilhelmina, your lover were present; he would rejoice in your objection: but with regard to your comparison, it does not suit the subject, but is lame, like most comparisons. You should have added, that the obligations of man and wife to bear one another's faults, have their limits, namely, if one party violate the promised engagements, and no more fulfil the design of the married state. As long as your husband performs his engagements, so long it is your duty faithfully to remain at his side, and to adhere to your obligations, even if another man should be more agreeable to you; if he unintentionally fail in his duties you must forgive him, because you yourself are not free from faults which require indulgence: but if he purposely violate his duties, if he thereby destroy the aim of the married state, he himself dissolves the tie which bound you to him, and you can have recourse to the laws to disannul your obligations; but if you will still bear with his conduct, remain with him, and be as a wife to him, this depends upon you, you violate no duty towards a third person, for you owe no obligations to any other man. But to the Church you stand in a very different relationship; Christianity has a fixed and high aim, and

the Church is appointed to facilitate the attainment of this aim to every individual. If a Church be so constituted, that, far from impeding, it promotes this aim, and conducts its members to the attainment of it, it is a good Church, because it answers its end. It must, therefore, be faithfully adhered to, even if it have some defects and imperfections, just as you, my dear Wilhelmina, are bound to be faithful to the man who discharges the duties of a husband towards you, although he have many failings and defects. But if a Church be so constituted as not to promote the end of Christianity, and, still more, if it maintain doctrines, rites, and institutions, which oppose this end, and impede its attainment, then you are not at liberty to remain with it as you are at liberty to remain with a husband from whom you might in justice be separated. You are, on the contrary, bound to quit this Church, because in this case you owe obligations to a *third* party, which requires this separation. Ask not who this third party is; it is more than one: the *first in it* is *God himself*, who in Jesus has sent you a guide to perfection, to whom you must give ear. From this perfection you are not permitted to make any deduction. The bridegroom at the altar does not pledge himself to possess all the perfections which the imagination of his bride may require of a husband, for how can he know what *beau ideal* of human perfection a woman's heart may have created? But here you know that we are to be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect. From this you dare not take away, from this the Church also dares not take away, because it is "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy, and without blemish." (Ephes. v. 27.) You are therefore not permitted to continue with a corrupt Church, as a wife may continue with an unworthy husband. The *second* in this *third* party to whom you owe obligations is your *Saviour himself*, whose the Church is, and who, for the end which the Church is to attain, has

sacrificed his blood and his life. He is the invisible Lord, the Head of his Church; he cannot acknowledge a Church community as his, and as the true Church, although it call him Lord, which, by its doctrines and rites, destroys the aim of his divine mission. The *third* in this party is, moreover, *you yourself*, because you will in a corrupt Church hardly become a true Christian, and acceptable to your Redeemer; and even if by Divine Grace this were possible to you, it is still wrong constantly to expose yourself to the dangerous and seducing influence of such doctrines and rites, which may divert you from the path of a true Christian. You are morally bound to flee the temptation and to strengthen your better disposition; therefore, on your own account, it is your duty to renounce the corrupt church and to join the better communion. Finally, your fellow Christians constitute the *fourth* in this *third* party. By your adherence to a church which opposes the aim of Christianity you confirm others, who are not able to withstand its baneful influence, in a similar adherence, you contribute to the support of a pernicious institution, you trespass against the welfare of your brethren, you commit treason against true Christianity.

Henry. I agree with you most cordially, my dearest father. Oh, how your words tranquillize me! I hope to prove to you that the Roman Catholic alone is the true Church, and promotes the aim of Christianity, while the Protestant impedes it. This, at least, is my inmost conviction, founded on strong grounds, and when I have laid these before you, and you are obliged to acknowledge their force, Oh then, dearest father—

Father, eyeing him stedfastly. I am to follow you, and also turn Catholic?

Henry was silent, he felt the force of the conclusion, but ventured not to answer in the affirmative, and only said that he in that case hoped to obtain his father's forgiveness.

But the father did not allow him to escape so easily; he, on the contrary, gave a turn to the subject, which made his son tremble. "If you," he solemnly added, "are an upright man and a Christian, you must, when we shall have proved to you that the Church of Rome contradicts the end of Christianity, abjure it, and again join ours. Do you assent to this?"

Henry remained silent and embarrassed. "Give me your hand," continued his father, "as a pledge of your assent, if I am to believe the sincerity of your Catholic profession, and am not to consider you as a hypocrite."

Henry summoned courage; he gave his hand: he was certain of his cause, he was a Catholic from conviction. Why should he hesitate?

"With this compact," interrupted his mother, "let us for to-day close the conversation upon this subject, and devote the rest of the evening to joy." Father and son willingly agreed to this: but the former only on that condition, that Henry should be prepared on the following evening, to produce the arguments of the Roman Catholics against the Protestant Church; but the first visits which Henry paid and received delayed the execution of this promise till the third evening.

CHAPTER V.

It was Sunday, and his parents and Wilhelmina were preparing to go to Church; Henry did the same, at which his mother silently rejoiced; but not so his father, he certainly was silent, but his serious looks betrayed the agitation of his mind. At length, as they were setting out, and as Henry laid hold of his hat, his father asked him gravely, "Do you accompany us? Do you go to *our* church?"

Henry. Yes! I hope you do not disapprove of it.

Father. I am certainly surprised at it, Henry; you consider us in such gross errors that you have separated from us, and yet you will go to our Church, and knowingly do what you have renounced as wrong. And is it not directly contrary to the principles of your Church to enter an heretical place of worship? Is it not forbidden by the priests?

"This prohibition," said Henry, hastily, "does not concern me, for before my departure from Rome I received the Papal permission not only to attend Protestant Churches, but also to partake of the Lord's Supper with you, and to observe all the usages of your Church."

"Silence!" exclaimed his father violently and severely, "Silence! Stay at home! You cannot enter our Church while you consider us as damned heretics, and our worship only as condemned heresy. No man can justify your becoming a hypocrite and an impostor, and only a villain will make use of such a permission."

Henry stood confused and ashamed; he staid at home: his mother wept, and to his father the devo-

tion of the day was lost. The truly painful examples of secret Roman Catholics, who by virtue of the *Papal permission* had played the part of Protestant Christians for years occurred to his memory; he thought of *King Charles the Second of England*, who had frequently given public assurances of his fidelity to the English Church, and yet, after his death, (in 1685) it was quite clear that he had been long a Roman Catholic. He remembered how the *hereditary Prince Frederic Augustus of the Saxon Electorate*, son of Augustus the Strong, had been secretly made a Roman Catholic in Italy, and how he had received permission to conceal his conversion from the year 1712 to the year 1717, and how, with the same permission, *Frederic, hereditary prince of Hessen Cassel*, had kept his conversion secret from the year 1749 to the year 1754; he knew also how *Duke Maurice William of Saxony*, Administrator of the Protestant Diocese of Zeitz, having been converted by the *Jesuit Schmeltzer*, who had *insinuated himself to him* under the title of a Secretary of Legation, had, in the year 1715, privately become a Roman Catholic, even without the knowledge of his duchess, and remained so secretly till the year 1717, still continuing to *administrate the diocese*. How could he forget recent examples of this kind? *Count Stolberg*, who, in the year 1798, in a work entitled "The Address of a Holstein Churchwarden," stepped forth as an advocate for Protestantism; and yet when he avowed himself a Roman Catholic, in the year 1800, he declared that he had entertained the same religious sentiments during the seven preceding years; or *Stark*, head preacher at the Court of Darmstadt, who discharged the duties of his office as a Protestant till his death, but had, during his life, published privately a defence of the Roman Catholic Church, and an attack upon the Protestants, under the title of "*Theodul's Feast*," and was interred in a Roman Catholic burying-ground. Or *Mr. Von Haller*, who, in his letters to his family,

relates that in the year 1820 he was privately received into the Catholic Church, at his country-seat, by a Roman Catholic bishop, but had obtained a dispensation to remain outwardly a Protestant, and a member of the council of his native town, which was pledged by oath to preserve the Protestant religion. This *Mr. Von Haller* also owned, in the letters just alluded to, (p. 13.) that the *Duke Adolphus of Meklenberg Schwerin*, who had also become a Roman Catholic, had assured him there were many secret Roman Catholics in Germany, who had obtained permission outwardly to conceal their creed. To find his Henry in the midst of such men, whose conduct he considered a mean hypocrisy, or a dishonourable weakness, was extremely painful to him, although it ought not to have come upon him unexpectedly, since he knew so many examples of the same kind. He was so agitated that he could not fix his attention during the service. When he, however, once during the sermon, raised his eyes, that had been gloomily cast on the ground, and directed them towards the minister, he saw Antonio standing under the pulpit, and listening to the discourse with the greatest attention. This gave his thoughts another direction. "Perhaps," thought he, "the seed of life is sown in the soul of this youth, which will bear good fruit," and he could not help thinking that it would perhaps have been better if he had allowed Henry to accompany them to Church. He remembered how he himself had accounted to his family for the conversion of so many Protestants in Rome, from the circumstance that they were obliged to be so long without spiritual nourishment in the metropolis of Roman Catholicism, and were thus induced to supply their religious wants in Roman Catholic Churches. It struck him that Wilhelmina had exculpated the conversion of her brother by maintaining that he would never have been unfaithful to his Church if he had remained in the bosom of his family, and within access to a Protestant Church. He felt so

deeply the truth of this observation that he repented of his violence, and returned home with tranquillized feelings. "Henry," said he, "I was wrong in prohibiting you from attending our Church. It is not right to prevent the sick from going to the physician. I have no objection against your frequenting our parish Church; on the contrary, I wish it: but never mention the dispensation to me! No *man* can permit you to hear the word of God and duly to worship him, consequently no *man* has a right to forbid it to you. He who believes that he requires such permission, proves, that instead of being a servant of God he is only a slave of man. And what does your Pope mean by this dispensation? either it is good and right for you to worship God, and then you require no such permission; or it is wrong and injurious, and then the Pope dares not give it you, and if he has given it to you, you dare not make any use of it.

Henry rejoiced to find his father so far reconciled; and he only offered in his own defence that he had viewed the prohibition to enter Protestant Churches as a point of discipline, not of morality; that the Roman Catholic Church had imposed it only out of precaution, lest the faith of its members might be endangered, and that a dispensation from it appeared to him by no means improper. But his father thought that Henry reasoned wrong, and that according to the principles of the Roman Catholic Church concerning heresy, such a permission could only be compared to that which a general gives to his spies, to wear for a time the uniform of the enemy, to mingle with them as friends, that they may either watch or mislead them. However, he thought that Henry, though in error, had not acted from evil intentions.

The more concerned his mother had been at the rising violence of his father when they went to church, the more rejoiced was she at this reconciliation. With these feelings of joy, she led the conversation to another subject, and asked Antonio, as he entered, whom

she also had seen in church, how the Protestant mode of worship had pleased him? "By St. Januarius!" exclaimed he, with Neapolitan animation, "I am extremely pleased with it."

Mother. Why has it pleased you?

Antonio. Because I can understand it.

Mother. That is, because you have learned German.

Antonio. That I do not mean; but, because the service is not here performed, as it is with us, in Latin, but in the language of the country.

Mother. You are not in earnest, Antonio!

Antonio. How can divine worship be edifying to the hearers in a language which they do not understand?

Henry. What Antonio says is true, mother. In the holy rites, especially in the mass, the Church has retained the Latin language, partly, because it is consecrated by the great antiquity of the ritual; partly, because it suits better the holy mysteries. The people would be only diverted in their devotions, if the ritual were performed in their mother tongue, and would have less reverence for the holy mysteries, which, at all events, they cannot *understand*, and whose power they ought only to *feel* in their hearts; therefore, the Church permits the holy liturgy to be read only in the Latin language.

Father. What language, Henry, did the Saviour and his Apostles use, when they taught and instituted these mysteries?

Henry. Why, certainly the language of their native country, the Hebrew; or, perhaps, the Greek language, which was very common among them.

Father. And in what language did the Christians of the first centuries celebrate the sacred rites?

Henry. I cannot deny that every assembly of Christians used their native language for that purpose—the Greeks, the Greek; the Romans, the Latin; and the Syrians, the Syriac.

Father. You see, dear Henry, that the Christians

had the right to perform public worship, and to celebrate the sacraments in their mother tongue. We also have this right. That the Western Christians performed divine worship in Latin was but right, as it was their native tongue, but that the Germans, English, and French, should do this in Latin, is both wrong and absurd. If devotion be promoted when the language is not understood; or, if any value be attached to the antiquity of a language, and a kind of sanctity be, on this account, stamped upon it, then the Hebrew, or at any rate the Greek language, in which the New Testament was written, and the holy mysteries were first celebrated, ought to be chosen in preference to the Latin. But why do you so adhere to the Latin ritual? Is it not as if you were afraid that the laity should understand it?

Wilhelmina. I should certainly not wish to be married according to the Latin ritual, for I should not know whether I was married or divorced by the words of the priest. What is not understood cannot, I should think, promote devotion. Would a German, that understood no English, be more interested if he heard Hamlet or Macbeth performed in English, than if he saw these master-pieces acted from a German translation?

Antonio, who had abruptly left the room, was now returned with a book, in which he was turning the leaves. It was a German translation of the New Testament, by Van Ess. "I have here," said he, "found a passage which makes me doubt very much if our priests are right in performing the public worship in Latin. St. Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth, in his first Epistle, (chap. xiv. 2.) 'For he that speaketh' (in the assembly) 'in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit, he speaketh mysteries.' But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.' Ver. 6. 'Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with

tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?' Ver. 9. 'So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken, *for ye shall speak unto the air.*' Ver. 13. 'Wherefore, let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may *interpret.*' Ver. 19. 'Yet in the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that, by my voice, I might teach others also, *than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.*' The Apostle, dear Henry, understood the subject well, and I feel convinced he is quite right, for the German mode of worship has edified me much more than the Latin mass, which I do not understand."

Henry was perplexed:—the family inquired of Antonio, where he had met with that book; he told them all the particulars concerning it:—they were all, especially the father, delighted at his sound understanding, and they exhorted him to read diligently in the Word of God, from which he would not fail to reap the fruit.

CHAPTER VI.

The evening afforded an opportunity to resume the conversation concerning Henry's change of creed. His father reminded him, that they had determined to come at once to the main point, and to investigate the question, in what connexion the Protestant, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, stands to the aim of Christianity. They seated themselves, domestically, around the table, and, before the commencement of the conversation, his mother provided a safe shelter for Henry against any occasional ebullitions of his father's violence. "Regard not your son," said she, "as an apostate from our Church, but as a Roman Catholic from his childhood, whom you wish to convert to the Protestant Church." These words awakened a hope in the breast of his father, which was well calculated to attune him to patience and gentleness—it was the hope, as he expressed himself, that Henry would recover, under his paternal roof, that good sense which he had lost in Rome. He, therefore, willingly acceded to the proposal of Wilhelmina, to make use, in their quotations from Scripture, of the translation of the New Testament by the Catholic priest Van Ess, that they might appear perfectly impartial towards Henry.

They soon agreed that the effects of Christ's mission was to be the *Saviour* of mankind, for his name, Jesus, has this signification; and they were unanimous that he became their Saviour, by saving and delivering them from their sins. St. Matthew i. 21. "And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their

sins." But when they came to explain how he became a *Saviour*, and what must take place in man to assure himself of salvation, a difference of opinion arose. After some discussion, they agreed to abide by the expressions of St. Paul, who must have been well aware of the aim of Christianity for the Gentiles, and of the influence which it was to produce on them. He writes to Titus, (ii. 11—14.) "For the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of that great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort."

All agreed that the Apostle here represents Jesus not only as saving mankind from the *punishment* of sin, but as *reforming* them, and delivering them from the *dominion* of sin; that, therefore, his aim, and, consequently, the aim of Christianity, is to lead man to a knowledge of God and his laws, to awaken them to the obedience of these, and to assure them, when thus *reformed*, of the favour of God and everlasting life.

"This," said Henry, "is entirely the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, and so far she agrees with the Protestant. But I maintain, that to accomplish this object in individual Christians, there is need of such an institution as the Roman Catholic Church, and that this aim cannot be attained by the constitution of the Protestant Church. The peculiarities of the Roman Catholic Church, which constitute the main subjects of difference between her and the Protestant Church, may be reduced to the following points; namely, she alone can be the true atoning institution, for she alone has been founded by Jesus and his Apostles, and is, therefore, the true Church;

she alone has the means of infallible knowledge of the Christian doctrines, as she only possesses a priesthood legally consecrated, and, therefore, legitimately ordained to teach and to administer the sacraments; she is the legally recognised central point of Church discipline; she possesses means of grace, independent of the dispositions of men, to secure to them forgiveness of sins and everlasting felicity. She alone, therefore, can fulfil the aim of Christianity, and deliver mankind from sin."

Father. You introduce many points at once, dear Henry; we will weigh them as we proceed. I will for once acknowledge, that your Church enjoys numerous means for releasing men from the *punishment* of sin, but I must remind you, that, on this very account, she is *not* adapted to deliver them from the *dominion* of sin. While she endlessly cancels the punishment of sin, she does not wean men from the commission of it, but confirms them in their moral levity.

Henry. The Roman Catholic Church requires penance and repentance of all who shall benefit by her means of grace.

Father. That I know perfectly well; but these are not sufficient to effect reformation. If the sinner does not live conformably to his promised penance, but continues to sin, can he be again absolved in the confessional?

Henry. Certainly, if he again promise to do penance. For the holy council of Trent distinctly teaches, (in the fourteenth session) "sinners can be absolved from their sins by the sentence of the priest, not only once, but as *often* as they penitently apply to him."

Father. But if the sinner does not reform, but—although often absolved by the priest,—continues to sin to the end of his life, can the last confession on his death-bed, the last absolution, or supreme unction, still secure heaven to him?

Henry. Undoubtedly. In this consists the great

ness of the sacerdotal power, which, while the soul continues in the body, can restore every sinner to the favour of God.

Father. Thereby you own, Henry, that your Church absolves the unreformed. For if a man, who often promises reformation, but never fulfils it, can, by repeated absolutions, be secured from punishment to his last breath, and be certain of everlasting life, then the Roman Catholic Christian has no need of real amendment to obtain eternal life, but has only to form continual resolutions for improvement. This appears to me, as if the master of a trade were to declare him a *travelled* journeyman, who had repeatedly set out upon his travels, but had always returned at the town gate *.

Henry. Oh no, my dear Father. He, who is truly penitent, will not immediately sin again with the same levity, and therefore the case you have stated cannot easily happen. Besides, the Council of Trent expressly says, (in the fourteenth session) that there must be a "*good disposition*" in the penitent.

Father. The truly penitent, certainly, will not immediately sin again, although the certainty of an ever-ready absolution must favour levity but too much. But how do your priests, who cannot fathom the human heart, know that the penitent is truly contrite, yea, that he feels a good disposition, and does not make profession of penitence with his lips alone?

Henry. That they certainly cannot know: but the Protestant ministers also cannot know that, when they absolve the penitent.

Father. But they do not forgive sins; they only proclaim to the penitent the forgiveness of God, if they really reform. He who does not do this, is not absolved. With you, however, the efficacy of absolu-

* In Germany a man is not permitted to become master in his trade unless he has travelled during several years, and has been employed in distant principalities, or in foreign countries. This is an ancient regulation of the guilds.

tion, as well as of all the sacraments, does not depend upon the Christian's state of mind, but upon the power of the priest; and the rite acts, as you say, *ex opere operato*, i. e. if it is only performed.

Henry. That is just the privilege of the Roman Church, that the efficacy of absolution is vested in the priest, and in the rite itself, and is not dependant upon the state of mind of the penitent. The priest requires external signs of penitence; if he sees these, he absolves; and if he absolves, his absolution is valid.

Father. Thereby you entirely confirm what I said. With you, to be saved, there is not even a necessity of repeated attempts at reformation, but merely a continual *penitence in words*, or external signs of "*a good disposition*," when the ever efficacious absolution succeeds. The journeyman has not even occasion to make up his bundle, and go as far as the town gate; he only need repeatedly promise that he will travel, and it is just as good as if he had performed his journey. This is extremely convenient for high and low, who may desire to die happily, but wish to live according to their inclinations. In what sense, then, is your Roman Catholic Church an institution that delivers *from sin?* She forgives your sins without ceasing, and secures you for ever from their *punishment*, while you need not deliver yourself from their *dominion*. You may follow your appetites and desires all your life, the priest, who is always in possession of the keys of heaven, will, at your death, infallibly open its gates for you. Do you not see that the real amendment of man is hereby rendered superfluous, and that your Church does not answer the end of Christianity, which is, first to reform men in earnest, and to renew them in the image of God, and *then only* to *promise* them forgiveness and everlasting life? Is it not evident, that it is an institution not calculated to deliver men from the dominion of sin, but only to *tranquillize* the sinner, and to lead the de-

praved to heaven through the power of the priest?—And this sacerdotal power you think worthy of admiration!—No, no; it can only be destructive of morality.

Henry. I certainly must own that the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, concerning the efficacy of the priest's absolution and the sacraments, may greatly contribute to encourage levity in the sinner; we therefore insist upon Christian amendment.

Father. This will do no good if the sinner believes that the priest can, at any time, forgive him all his sins. Your public worship is, likewise, not sufficiently calculated for moral improvement. The mass, the propitiatory sacrament, is the main point; this the whole congregation must attend; the sermon is only a secondary object, it is frequently entirely omitted; and no one is bound to listen to it. But, independently of this, the doctrine of your Church concerning the power of the priest, to grant remission of sins, cannot be true, because it evidently impedes the aim of Christianity, which is to reform the sinner.

Mother. Here your Father is perfectly right, my dear Henry. Oh! listen not to the voice of a priesthood which arrogates to itself a divine power, and which, by forms and usages, will prescribe bounds to divine justice; but attend to the voice of your Saviour and his Apostles, who promise admission into the kingdom of heaven to no man who is not truly reformed, and leads a pious life. Does not your Saviour say, St. John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." And does this new birth amount to no more than to confess to the priest, and do penance? Hear how St. Paul explains this new birth. He says, Ephes. iv. 21. "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye

put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." St. Peter also, whose successor the Pope asserts himself to be, is not satisfied with repentance and penances alone, but requires in Christians an entire amendment of life. 1 Peter i. 14. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."

Henry. But, dear mother, the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Protestant insists upon true holiness of life; it only maintains that Christ has given power to the priesthood to absolve from sin as soon as the sinner discovers symptoms of penitence. For the words of our Saviour, which he addressed to his disciples, (St. John xx. 23.) "Receive ye the Holy Ghost! Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosesoever sins ye retain they are retained," must confer upon the priesthood the power to forgive or to retain sins. Or is it not sufficiently evident, when the Saviour (Matt. xviii. 18.) saith, "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven?" Here there is no subterfuge; here it must inevitably be acknowledged that the priesthood is invested with power to open heaven, and to deliver men from the punishments of sin.

Father. You are here perfectly in error, my dear Henry: with regard to the latter passage, the meaning of it may be deduced from its connexion with the two foregoing verses, 15—17, where the question is, not how the Apostles should act when they heard confessions (for this they never did) but when they should have contentious and restless members in the Church of the Lord. They were to warn such an individual first privately, then in the presence of witnesses. V. 17. it is said "If he shall neglect to hear them tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the

Church let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, &c." You see here clearly, Henry, that our Saviour only says that when the Christian Church excommunicates from or re-admits into its communion an unworthy and obdurately impenitent offender, its sentence will be valid in his eyes, and in those of his heavenly Father. There is, therefore, no question here of forgiveness of sins before God, or of remission of eternal punishment, but of excommunication from or re-admission into the Christian community.

Henry. I see that the connexion of the verses perfectly justifies your explanation of *this* passage; but what do you say to the *former* passage? Is there not express mention made there of *forgiveness of sins?*

Father. Yes; but it contains no proof whatever of the absolving power of the priesthood. I believe with many learned divines of our Church, who held the Bible in high veneration, as, for instance, Reinhard and Morus, that to *forgive sins* is here to be understood of the miraculous cures which the Apostles, after the example of Jesus, should perform by the power of the Holy Ghost. Since, namely, (as we learn from St. Matt. ix. 2. St. John ix. 23.) illnesses were considered as punishments for sins, their miraculous cures might naturally be regarded as forgiveness of sins, as their punishment no longer continued. Thus Jesus often said to the sick whom he healed, "*Thy sins be forgiven thee;* sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee." You find an example of this kind in Acts iii. where Peter heals a lame man, and in verse 12. acknowledged that he had not made this man to walk by his own power or holiness, but that God had done it by him.

Henry. This explanation, although it may appear probable enough, has too much that is new to reconcile me to it.

Father. I will not urge it upon you: for even if *forgiveness of sins* is here to be understood as forgiveness before God, the absolution of the priest in the confessional cannot be thence inferred. Where does Jesus say in this passage that absolution can take place *more than once*, that it can be repeated at every confession? His words do not even express that forgiveness of sins is an *external rite* which may be repeated; the words can, without offering them any violence, be thus understood—to whomsoever ye grant pardon for the sins which they have committed against me and the kingdom of God, to whomsoever ye forgive their offences, and allow them admission to my Church, such will I also forgive. Perhaps the allusion here is only to baptism, at which, according to the unanimous doctrine of the primitive Church, the forgiveness of sins previously committed took place, or might be hoped, and then the sense is this:—whom you admit by baptism and absolve from his sins, him will I also absolve before God. These explanations shew at least that these words afford no grounds for justifying the *repeated* absolutions of *sinning Christians;* for St. John both expects and requires from *Christians* that they shall no more sin nor have need for absolution: he says, 1 John iii. 5, 6. "And ye know that he (Christ) was manifest to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." But the same Apostle refers the Christian, if he should still sin, not to the priest for his absolution, but to God and Christ; he writes 1 John i. 9. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Chap. ii. 1. "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."

Finally, my dear Henry, you must allow that our Saviour, in both passages, speaks *only with his Apostles*, and that consequently the plenary power which he imparts to them, be its design what it may, is only

personal. That they *could* transfer this plenary power to others, yea, that it was at all transferable, is no where intimated. We have no account of the Apostles having transferred it to others; and wherever the privileges and offices of the bishops and elders are mentioned in the New Testament, there is not the slightest allusion that they either possessed, or were to exercise, the power of forgiving sins. On the contrary, we learn from ecclesiastical history, of which I have some knowledge, (as every well-informed Christian ought to have,) that confessions and absolutions have sprung from the penances of the Church, to which the excommunicated were obliged to submit.

Henry. How did this happen?

Father. Those who gave scandal and offence to the congregation were excommunicated from the Church community, and were obliged, if they wished to be again admitted, not only publicly and penitently to acknowledge their crime in the congregation, but to submit to certain penances, and outward signs of the sincerity of their contrition. As the congregations grew larger, this public avowal of repentance was gradually changed into a private confession before the bishop and the clergy, and absolution and the imposition of penances were pronounced by these alone. Hence, in the course of time, your oral confession has arisen, and has been extended to all, even the most secret sins; and hence absolution was no longer confined to the forgiveness of the congregation and the Church, but came to signify forgiveness before God, and deliverance from eternal punishment. Thus your confession and absolution systems have arisen, and the assertion of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the efficacy of the Priest's absolution for deliverance from divine and eternal punishments, is nothing but an abuse.

Henry. Pardon me, dear father, if I doubt this origin of the sacrament of penance. The Holy Council of Trent says expressly, (14th session, chap. v. on

Penance): "Since the sacrament of private confession has been constantly recommended by the *holiest* and *oldest* fathers of the Church, with great unanimity, and has been used by the holy Church *from the beginning*; it is a mere calumny if a man scruples not to say that it has no divine origin, but is a human invention, and first instituted at the Lateran Council."

Father. On this point the holy council is undoubtedly in error. I will leave it to you to peruse the writings of the holiest and oldest fathers of the Church, as those of Hermas, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and even the Apostolical Constitutions, and I will wait to see if you can discover but a single passage which authorizes the Roman Catholic oral confession; they all treat only of the penance which the fallen and excommunicated member was required to do before the bishop and the other clergy, or publicly in the congregation; and the words "all that ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" refer exclusively to the right of excluding unworthy members from the earthly community of Christians, and of re-admitting them when penitent. But there is not a word from which it may appear that the priest has the power to forgive sins in the sight of God, or to cancel the punishments of the world to come *.

Henry. Very well, dear father, I will peruse these authors, and will give you an account of the result.

Father. You will derive much benefit from them, and you will find that not only in this but in many other points the confident and reiterated assertion of the Catholic divines, that the doctrines of the primitive Church correspond entirely with those of the Roman Catholic, is unfounded.

Mother. As far as I am concerned I do not inquire into your learned investigations, but simply adhere to the expressions of our Saviour and his

* See Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix I.

Apostles; these do not contain one word of the sacrament of confession and priestly absolution. According to Scripture the acceptance of the sinner is much more simple: I do not find there that the office of judge, which God alone as searcher of hearts can execute, has been transferred by him to sinful men, who are to spare him the trouble of judging and forgiving. The prodigal son (Luke xv. 12.) returns quite simply, and asks forgiveness of his father, who receives him with open arms, without having him first absolved by a priest. And where the Saviour (Matt. xxv. 31.) describes the last judgment, which he will hold himself, and commit to no priest, he only asks if a man has fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, and not if he has been absolved by a priest, and at his death received extreme unction. On these words of my Saviour I rely with far more confidence than on all the indulgences and absolutions of men.

Father. Your mother has hit the mark, my dear Henry, it is quite clear that God cannot transfer his judicial office to sinful men, who themselves stand in need of grace, and who cannot fathom the heart; that, therefore, the keys with which the priesthood pretend to open and shut heaven can be applied at most only to excommunication from and re-admission into the community of the Church, and consequently only to forgiveness *before men.* It is likewise clear that our Saviour is not satisfied that a man at confession has felt *a good disposition,* and has consequently been absolved, but that he requires a *whole life dedicated to virtue,* and nothing else.

Henry. I own that I know not what to answer to this; but do not take me by surprise, give me time to reflect further upon this point, perhaps it will appear clearer to me.

Father. By all means, my dear Henry, only seek the truth honestly.

CHAPTER VII.

The following evening Henry confessed that he had not yet found an answer to the subject of yesterday's conversation, and begged, in the mean time, to pass on to another point. His father remarked that it might be well if Wilhelmina's intended husband (who had lately been appointed Deacon in L——) took a part in their conversations, particularly in order to support him in reference to the history of the Christian Church, or learned interpretations of Scripture. Henry made no objection to this, but he thought that the parties would then become unequal, as he had none to support him; but his father reminded him that he possessed all the requisite knowledge of ancient languages, history, and philosophy. At the same time he promised that his future son-in-law should only then be called upon when his assistance might be required. Henry was satisfied, and his father jestingly asked Wilhelmina if she had any objection to this. "I shall rejoice," returned she, "to have an opportunity of forming an idea of my Bernhard's learning, for so far his conversations have not been just scholastical: I will only request that Henry may not make a Roman Catholic of him, for much as I love him I would then certainly not wish to have him for a husband."

Henry. O holy zeal! Can a Roman Catholic then not be amiable? Does love inquire after professions of faith? You surely do not marry a man's creed, but himself!

Wilhelmina. And just because I wish to call my husband altogether my own soul and body, his creed is of great consequence to me. Philosophers may decide, if it can be explained, what love is; I do not know it. Bernhard tells me that an ancient philosopher maintained that the soul was originally severed into two halves, which, during life seek each other, and when they meet melt into one. This explanation appears not improper to me, for in true love, where not only the hand and ring, but the heart is given, there exists such a union. But a Roman Catholic and a Protestant soul, if both be true to their creeds, must repel each other; for the former considers the latter as lost in destructive errors, and the latter considers the former obscured by narrow prejudices, and filled with superstitious terrors of the power of the priesthood. How can these unite into one? They will either repel one another, or the one will draw the other to her faith.

Henry. You contradict all experience, dear sister. In countries where both creeds prevail, you find intermarriages very numerous, and very happy.

Wilhelmina. That may be; I speak only from my own views, according to which such an intermarriage can only prove happy on the supposition that one or both parties are either irreligious, dull, or unfeeling, and consider marriage only as a civil contract, or marry for the sake of fortune, connexions, or ——; and this may frequently be the case, the Catholic party does not believe all the articles of faith which the priesthood have established, and is consequently of Protestant sentiments.

Henry. But why should not the members of both Churches agree in marriage? May not each party suffer the other to adhere to its own creed?

Wilhelmina. So the Protestant may think, but not the Catholic. The latter, because his Church declares all heretics as eternally damned, cannot remit his endeavours to convert his Protestant partner to his own

faith, and must feel deep concern if he does not succeed. But how can he unite heart and soul with one doomed to damnation?

Mother. Here I agree perfectly with Wilhelmina, particularly in regard to the education of the children. Each party will wish to see the children brought up in their own creed, and must wish it, if they have faith *in their Church.* It must be intolerable to the Protestant party, and an eternal thorn in their heart, to see their children educated in a blind faith; in doctrines which they consider as erroneous, in rites which they hold as superstitious. To the Catholic party it must be equally intolerable to see their children instructed in errors destructive of the soul, and to see them led directly to hell. Here no peace can exist. What rejoices the one grieves the other; what is consoling to the one brings despair to the other. He only can be contented in such a situation, who is indifferent towards Christianity and towards religion in general.

Father. You must not be offended, Henry, if I cannot declare myself of a different opinion. It would be intolerable to me if I had a wife, who hurried with superstitious anxiety to mass, instead of minding her children at home; who prayed to the saints when she ought to worship God; who divulged to her confessor all the secrets of marriage, for conscience-sake; who tormented herself with fasts and penances; who pitied me as a wretched and damned heretic; against whom, as the secret ally of proselyting Priests, I must always be on my guard, lest she seduce my children to Catholicism; with whom I, on Sunday and on other festivals, could not go to the same Church; and who was constantly privately tormenting me to turn Roman Catholic, for the salvation of my soul.

Henry. Oh, my dear father, with what dark colours you paint the case! I do not believe that experience confirms your opinion.

Father. This you think only because you have

not yet had any experience. Read the newspapers, and you will find abundant proofs, that your Priests make it a point of conscience to the Catholic husband or wife, to bring up all the children in the Roman Catholic faith. They require this promise when they are to perform the marriage ceremony between parties of different creeds, and marry no couple that does not make this promise; they absolve no husband, no wife in the confessional, who do not engage to exert their utmost endeavours in conducting the children to the Catholic Church. And this is not done by individual zealots alone, but by all; for so their instructions run: they are obliged to do so, according to the orders of the Pope.

Henry. Here you must certainly be mistaken, my dear father. If this were the case, the father of Christendom, the Pope, would not consider the Protestants as Christians, not regard them, though in error, as his children, but as heathens, and, as it were, tainted with pestilence.

Father. Ah, my son, how little do you know your Church! Here is a book entitled "Authentic Correspondence between the Court of Rome and the French Government; translated from the French by Kessler, 1814," in which I read as follows (p. 158) from a circular of the late Pope, dated Feb. 27th, 1809, to the French Clergy: "Some of you have requested me to invest you with the power of granting permission to marry in cases where one party acknowledges the Catholic faith and the other *heretical doctrines.* But you are, I believe, aware, that the true Catholic Church of Christ has highly disapproved of marriages with heretics; for the Church *detests* such unions, as my predecessor, Pope Clement XI. has observed, on account of their great disparity, and the *no small peril to the soul,* which attends them; and, on nearly the same grounds on which Christians are prohibited from *marrying with infidels,* he has constantly deterred Catholics from forming *impious* alliances with

heretics." It is, therefore, deeply to be lamented, that among Catholics there are some, who, seduced by a *disgraceful* passion, do not shudder at such *highly condemnable* alliances, which the holy Mother, the Church, has always reprobated and prohibited. For, besides the great danger of acquiring a *perverted spirit*, against which the Catholic party, *as well as the child to be begotten, cannot be sufficiently guarded*, it is likewise extremely difficult to live together in domestic unity, if there exist a difference of faith." What the Pope says here of the disunion which will arise in marriages between persons of different creeds, is very true, and ought to deter a prudent Protestant from uniting himself with one who professes the Roman Catholic faith, as this maintains principles which will not admit of peace. But you see also from this, Henry, that your Church detests such marriages, and that the argument, that the Catholic party and the child to be begotten cannot be sufficiently guarded against the influence of Protestant principles, obliges the Catholic priests to use every exertion to make proselytes of the Protestant party, or, at least, to convert the children. Therefore, they are only permitted to marry a couple of different persuasions, on condition that the children be educated in the Catholic faith. This you find also from a public manifesto of the king of Prussia, dated March 2d, 1819, who notified:—"That the proceedings of the Catholic Clergy, (in the provinces on the Rhine) according to which they *require*, that persons, professing the Catholic faith, who wish to form matrimonial alliances with Non-Catholics, must promise to have their children, of both sexes, educated in the Catholic Religion (Confession) are unlawful proceedings."

This is a sufficient proof, that in an intermarriage between parties professing the two creeds, there cannot exist peace. You also see, that the father of Christendom, as you call the Pope, considers us as

no better than heathen and pestilential; that a good Catholic ought to *shudder* at forming an alliance with us, as our intercourse is attended with *no small peril to his soul.* And what is it that renders us such detestable objects? Do we deny Christ? Do we hold vice allowable? Do we deny obedience to the higher powers? Nothing of all this! We only do not believe in a Pope, not in the power of the Priests, not in the seven sacraments, not in mass, and in the virtue of holy water. Are these proper grounds for pronouncing good Christians, who strive, after the model of Jesus, to become righteous in love, as detestable, as destroyers of souls, as no better than heathens? But all this proceeds from your uncharitable maxim, that all who do not believe in the Pope and the Priesthood, are, without claim to mercy, eternally damned; and this maxim the Priesthood have established, only because they imagine to find in it the securest prop of their power.

Henry. I cannot conceal, that these severe decrees concerning intermarriages, were not known to me, and that I am not inclined to approve of them. But, with regard to the sentence of condemnation, which the Catholic Church pronounces against all heretics, and, consequently, against Lutherans and reformed, it is certainly perfectly true, that it denies them eternal salvation, and absolutely refuses them all mercy. It was this severe sentence of condemnation which was particularly repulsive to me at my adoption of the Roman Catholic faith. I could not assent to this principle; my heart thought of *you!*—It was just as impossible for me to condemn you as to consider you as condemned. After a long dispute with my friend Rossi, he at length gave me an explanation which satisfied me. The Catholic Church, he observed, must, as the only true Church, and the only one founded by Christ, consider every other Church-community as spurious, and, as the Scriptures teach that only those who belong to the kingdom of Christ,

or to the Church, can be saved, must declare all Non-Catholics as damned. In so doing she only maintains her dignity, but, at the same time, she does not deny, that God, through his grace, may bestow eternal salvation on individual Christians of other Church-communities, who are remarkably pious and zealous in good works. But as this depends on the extraordinary grace of God, the Church cannot determine this point, nor establish it as an article of faith. The Church does not know what God will do in this case, she only knows, that, according to the *revealed* scheme of salvation, he who is without the pale of the Church is likewise without the pale of salvation, and this she acknowledges; but the *concealed* council of God concerning the salvation of good men without the pale of the Church, she must leave to divine mercy, and, therefore, refrains from declaring her sentiments on this point, partly because she cannot form an opinion upon it, and partly because such a declaration would only strengthen the levity of mankind.

Father. Your opposition speaks in favour of your heart; but, that you were satisfied with this distinction, shews that you did not reflect sufficiently. Where has your Church left such a loophole to private opinion? What your Church, or rather the Priesthood, as lords and guardians of the Church, teach, *that* you, as a layman, are bound to believe, and, consequently, to believe that we *shall* all be condemned; for this she teaches. She does not permit a private opinion; for it is heresy to have an opinion of our own which deviates from the established doctrine of the Church. Your Friend Rossi has deceived you. What he has said to you he never would have ventured to declare publicly. And must not what is permitted in one case also be allowed in the other? Would you dare to express, concerning the sacraments, the power of the Priests, or purgatory, a private opinion differing from the Church, without being considered a heretic?

Henry. Freedom of opinion does certainly not extend so far.

Father. So you see, that even the alleged freedom of opinion concerning the damnation of heretics, is but a pretended one, which your Church condemns, and is obliged to condemn. On the contrary, the Roman Catechism distinctly says, "As this one Church (the Roman) cannot err, because she is guided by the Holy Spirit; *it is evidently certain, that all other pretended Churches are led by the spirit of the devil, and have the most destructive errors of faith and practice.*"

Mother. But can you, Henry, really believe, that God will condemn a man because he believes rather in Jesus and his precepts than in the Pope; rather in the Apostles than in the Bishops; rather in the doctrines of the New Testament than in the decrees of Church councils; and puts more confidence in the former than in the latter? Read only with how much simplicity our Saviour explains what is necessary for the attainment of eternal life. He says, (John xvii. 3.) "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John iii. 36: "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life." And, chap. v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." See, my dear Henry, how consoling to the Christian are these simple words of the Lord! He requires nothing but faith in the one true God, faith in himself as the Messiah, and obedience to his (moral) commandments. He no where insists on faith in the artificial doctrines which the Pope and the Councils have established, and which the unlearned, and perhaps even the learned, do not understand. I have always been touched when I have read, in the Acts of the Apostles, (xvi. 24, &c.) how the keeper of

the prison came trembling, and fell down before the Apostle Paul, and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and at the Apostle's simple answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house!" St. Paul has either not spoken the truth, or the belief in the Pope, the Priesthood, the mass, purgatory, and other things, are perfectly unnecessary to salvation, and your Priests condemn us uncharitably and unjustly *.

Father. Certainly it is so. For we believe, like you, in the one true God, and in Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. These two points of doctrine are contained in the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds; and these our Church has also; and, therefore, in these points, professes exactly your doctrine! Now if Jesus (John xvii. 3.) marks these two points as those which must be believed, in order to obtain salvation, you make Christ a liar if you will condemn us on account of other doctrines, which regard your Priesthood and their power. Truly, we do not stand in need of the compassionate subterfuge of your pride, that God may, perhaps, from a hidden grace, save one or other of us. We are certain that we shall be saved if we keep the Word of God.

Henry. I must acknowledge the force of these declarations of Christ. But there is still another point which prevents me from agreeing with you, and which, when Rossi first represented it to me, weighed very heavily upon my heart; namely, that there is but *one* true Church, that this is the Roman Catholic Church, and that, consequently, salvation can only be attained within her community.

Father. Upon this we will speak the next time we meet, and will then request Bernhard's presence. Till then, Henry, bear in mind, that your Church, in insisting on this point, does not serve the aim of Christianity, to form moral men; that she, without

* Testimonies of the Fathers; see Appendix II.

any regard to their Christian morality, condemns all those who do not agree with her in articles of faith, and, therefore, makes the attainment of salvation, through Christ, solely dependant on certain points of belief, and the observance of particular rites.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE next morning, when Antonio met Henry, he gradually led the conversation to the Bible, and, at length, asked him, if he had read the New Testament. When Henry answered, that he had been familiar with it from his youth, Antonio expressed great joy, and added, that he hoped Henry would be able to answer several questions, which had, for some time, weighed on his mind. "Not religious scruples?" asked Henry peevishly. "Certainly!" answered Antonio. "I can discover nothing of so many points, which, from my earliest youth, I have been taught to consider as necessary parts of Christianity, and am, therefore, very doubtful whether all these are true, and who may have introduced them. You would oblige me very much if you could give me some account and elucidation of this subject, which you, as you have received a liberal education, and have studied at the University, will certainly be able to do."

Henry. You require too much of me, Antonio; I have been educated in the Lutheran Church, and have only, a year ago, turned to the Orthodox Roman Church. I am, therefore, myself but a novice, who must seek instruction, and I cannot give you information upon every point.

Antonio. I know that you became a Roman Catholic last year. Then you have made a true *salto mortale.* I find it very difficult to continue a Roman Catholic, and I wish you would come to my assist-

ance. This you will certainly be able to do, as all those scruples which agitate me, must likewise have presented themselves to your mind, and have been surmounted by you.

Henry. Go, dear Antonio, banish such scruples, and adhere to the faith of your fathers in pious simplicity.

Antonio. Pardon me; this advice you have yourself not followed.

Henry. There you are right. But I had studied, and was, therefore, well versed in the learned controversies of theologians: you have no previous knowledge of the subject.

Antonio. Ah! since I have repeatedly read the New Testament, I do not find myself, by any means, as ignorant as I formerly was. I certainly meet with much that I do not comprehend, because I have not studied; but the discourses of Jesus I understand perfectly, and I see that it is by no means difficult to learn from Scripture, what we are to believe and to do, in order to become true Christians, and to obtain eternal life. *(With animation.)* I do not see at all, why, with us, the reading of the Bible is prohibited.

Henry. But many persons have, through the perusal of the Scriptures, become heterodox. Beware not to fill your head with idle surmises.

Antonio. Heterodox?—Does not that mean *foolish in belief?*

Henry. Not exactly that; but to believe otherwise than the established doctrines of the Church requires.

Antonio. Well, indeed, that has already happened to me, and just therefore I wished to have an explanation from you.—But do not make yourself uneasy about my vain surmises. I assure you, that the doubts which have arisen in my mind, from the perusal of the New Testament, cause me no uneasiness; but, on the contrary, all that I have learnt from it, consoles, and, I think, improves me.—At least, I have since been extremely cheerful. Have you not perceived that?

Henry. Well, and what have you learnt, that makes you so cheerful?

Antonio. But——You will, perhaps, smile at me.

Henry. Now you are for once *foolish in belief.*

Antonio. Well, then, you shall hear!—It is the passage in St. Matthew, chap. xix. 16—19. where it is said:—"And behold one came and said unto him, good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter unto life, keep the Commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother; and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This passage has made me very cheerful.—You shall hear how this happened.

It was about six years ago that we celebrated, in Naples, the Passion Week and Good Friday. My heart was full of the sufferings and death of our Lord, and I was so melancholy and dejected, that I could not remain in the streets of the city, and, towards evening, I ascended Mount Elmo, which overlooks Naples and the sea. Then I lay down under a tree. All around me was hushed; the sun sank in silent majesty into the distant floods of the ocean, and the blue dome of heaven darkened above me. Yonder —thought I—the Redeemer is now in splendour and glory, and no earth-worm, in the form of Pharisee or Priest, is able to cloud his brightness. But where may that heaven be, which has received the Saviour, after his sufferings; that heaven, where I also am to enter to joy everlasting!—I gazed upward as far as my eye could reach, but I saw no boundary.—My sight aspired higher and higher, my ideas struggled; but eternity lay before me. My thoughts were lost. An inexpressible longing for the life of the blessed remained deeply grafted in my soul. The sun, the

fountain of light, had set; the roseate tints of evening grew pale; night arose in the east;—now the evening star glimmered in the west, brighter and brighter, till it shone in the heavens in silver lustre, like a pure and consecrated taper. In this lovely star, thought I in my ignorance,—perhaps heaven may be! The paradise of the blessed may display itself in such pure and silent brightness! My imagination soared from earth to this beautiful paradise, and I walked with angels and saints, and with my dear parents, amidst its groves. How happy I felt! I took of the tree of knowledge, and ignorance and folly fell like scales from my eyes. I ate of the tree of life, and felt that henceforth I should no more be subject to age, and that sickness and death had lost their power over me. I was blessed;—I forgot the world,—it was the happiest moment of my life! But the chill of the night-dew awakened me from my dreams, and drew me down again to the earth. Then it seemed as if paradise were lost to me for ever;—I was Adam, when he had been driven from the garden of Eden. To enter there was the glowing desire which remained in my bosom. —But where is the path that will lead me thither? Who can give me a pledge that I shall find it?— "Alas!" I loudly and painfully exclaimed, "if thou, oh my Saviour, didst still walk here below, or if I had lived in the days of thy sojourning upon earth, then I might have inquired of thee, and have heard from thy lips, what I must do to obtain eternal life! It certainly was a foolish wish. I acknowledged this to myself. But still it continued fixed in my soul, and was often awakened anew at the view of the evening-star, like a longing for home at the thoughts of our native land.—But, behold! in the days when the Saviour sojourned among men, a youth had the same desire that I had, and approached the Lord with the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"— How I bless the Holy Evangelist, that he has recorded the answer which the Redeemer returned.—Now I

also have questioned him, and have been answered by him; and, therefore, I am so cheerful.

Henry, (thoughtfully). My dear Antonio! I also have gazed upon the evening-star, and have felt a desire, similar to yours. Why could I not find the answer, which you have found! I was referred to the Church.

Antonio, (warmly). To the Church,—to Rome,—you need not have recourse. Believe me, heaven remains not deaf to the honest application of the heart. That evening, when I was gazing up to the lofty vault of heaven, which spans earth and seas, and loses itself in immeasurable space, Italy and sacred Rome dwindled into a poor clod of earth, St. Peter's dome appeared a mole-hill, and the priest at the altar as weak a mortal, as far removed from the evening-star, and as feeble as I. From *Him*, from *Him*, who descended from heaven, and was again taken up into heaven, I wished to hear, how I could find entrance there.

Henry, (calmly). But why, Antonio, had you no confidence in the Church, which pourtrays, and visibly represents the invisible Church of Heaven, in which the Saviour has vested the power of securing paradise to the believer, by means of the sacraments?

Antonio. I was perfectly acquainted with all that the Church teaches and promises. But these consolations have, since that time, appeared to me but very melancholy, and abundantly alloyed with fear and terror. I could, therefore, not rejoice in them, but grew the more uneasy and dejected. Alas! as far as regards an orthodox Roman Catholic, who wishes for the salvation of his soul, it is an anxious and wretched case. Only conceive! At our birth we belong to the kingdom of Satan, who holds us in his power, till the priest, by virtue of exorcism at *baptism*, delivers us from his dominion. That to me is already very painful, that I ever, and quite unconsciously too, have been under the power of Satan. Ah, how securely I rest with my Saviour! He does not say, that infants, previous to baptism, belong to the kingdom of Satan.

He called little children, who were still unbaptized, to him, kissed them, and blessed them, and said, that the kingdom of heaven was theirs, and that all who would enter therein, must be even like unto innocent children. But by baptism I am yet not secure against the wiles of Satan. The sacrament of *confirmation* is next required; of which the Roman Catechism says, that it is to fortify us against all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. I believe that Confirmation is good, because the Church has ordained it; but I do not find in the New Testament, that Jesus or the Apostles * confirmed those who had been baptized. But even this safeguard is not sufficient to secure to us the grace of God and eternal life. A man must avail himself, once a year at least, of the sacrament of holy *Confession*. The holy Council of Trent says, that the priests are there in the room of God and Christ, "judges (judices) of sinners and their sins." They can absolve, or deny absolution, and sin and its punishments rest on him to whom such an absolution is denied; he is shut out from heaven, and Baptism and Confirmation avail him nothing. Alas! Confession has often deeply grieved me! I thought, in my simplicity, why has the Almighty placed another man as judge between me and him? And that in a case where I have only offended him, and not the priest? Why may he not forgive me, if the priest should think proper to deny me absolution? He is merciful, but only when the priest pronounces that he will have mercy! This I could never explain to myself, and I was much grieved that God regards us poor laymen as too insignificant to hear himself our confession, and to judge, and absolve us. But since I have read what our Saviour says of the prodigal son, how

* Acts viii. 14—17. Antonio might have here found that the *Apostles* performed the rite of Confirmation on such as had been already baptized. The administration of this rite is, therefore, justly restricted by the Church of England to the Bishops, as the successors of the Apostles.—*M.*

his father received and forgave him, I feel quite differently. But our apprehension is not yet at an end; for if the priest absolves me, and I begin to lead a new and Christian life, the Church still requires of me to perform acts of penance, in order to avert divine judgment, namely, to fast, to give alms, to repeat prayers, &c. The holy Council of Trent expressly says, (in the 13th canon of the 14th session,) "Whosoever denies this, and says, that a new and reformed life is the most efficacious act of penance, *let him be cursed.*" But our Saviour, in the above passage of St. Matthew, ch. xix. 16—19. says only, that I am to keep the moral commandments, in order to obtain eternal life. But even if I have performed abundant acts of penance, and have lived as an upright Christian, I still require the sacrament of *Extreme Unction.* This possesses the power of atoning for the less grievous or remissible sins, and to ward off Satan at the moment of death. "For," says the Holy Council, (14th session,) "although Satan seizes every opportunity during our life to entangle our souls as much as lies in his power, yet there is no point of time when he so actively summons all his wiles to destroy us, and to deprive us of our dependance on divine mercy, as when he sees that we are dying." This doctrine has always terrified me. What a wretched being is man, if Baptism, Confirmation, Absolution, acts of Penance, and a pious life, cannot so far guard him against Satan, but that the great enemy may still rob him of paradise on his death-bed, if the saving hand of the priest be not near him with the holy oil! Truly, a merciful God has not rendered it easy for an orthodox Catholic Christian to obtain mercy in his sight.

But our terrors are yet not at an end. Our Catechism and the Church teach, "there is also a *Purgatory,* in which the souls of the *pious* are, for a certain time, tormented, and thus obtain reconciliation, that the gate of eternal life may be opened to them, into which nothing impure may enter." Of what avail is

is to me now, that I, from my birth to my death, have conscientiously made use of all the sacraments? The priest must now read masses for my soul, by virtue of which it may be delivered from purgatory. Therefore, even when my soul is departed from this world, it is not dependent on the mercy of God alone, but is still in need of the priest's offering. Therefore, I think that the soul of an orthodox Roman Catholic is in a miserable predicament: in life and death it does not depend on the hand of God, but on that of the priest.

Henry. But, Antonio, do you not see, that conscious as we are of our sins, it is most consoling for us that the Church possesses so many means of grace, which accompany us during our whole life? Who can despond when he is, on all sides, sheltered by the power of the Church, and when even the departed soul remains not unprotected, but is led to the gates of paradise by the holy offering of mass?

Antonio. But by all these precautions and entrenchments, my soul appears to me like a besieged city, where constant breaches are forming, where the enemy is ever making inroads, and is only with difficulty repulsed by the valour of the garrison. I feel myself, in this case, just as much cut off from God, as a besieged city is from her sovereign, and equally dependent on the power of the protecting priests, as the city is on the mercy of the besieger.

Henry. You simpleton! The power of the Church is so infallible, that her sacraments offer the most perfect security against all the attacks and persecutions of the enemy of your soul, so that you may rest in perfect peace, and ought to compare yourself not to a besieged, but to a liberated city, filled with the triumphs of conquest.

Antonio. Pardon me, this triumph can only commence when delivered from purgatory: I make my entrance through the gates of Paradise: till then there are dangers and struggles.

Henry. Therefore the Church accompanies you

thither with her sacraments, and through their constant and infallible efficacy affords you invincible protection. Here lies the eminent advantage of our orthodox Church over the Protestant, that she makes the salvation of the sinner dependent on the performance of the sacramental rite itself, and not, as the Protestant, on faith, or firm conviction of the grace of God. The Protestant Christian cannot be certain whether his faith be sufficiently firm, he has always reason to fear that it may become wavering; he must, therefore, be agitated with constant apprehension concerning his acceptance.

Antonio. I should not think so, my dear Henry; I have so much confidence in the truth of the answer which Jesus gave to the question, What must I do that I may have eternal life? that my trust can never be shaken, and I shall ever believe in the mercy of the father, who received the prodigal son when he returned full of repentance. To me the case appears quite simple. If I believe in God I must also believe that he is *merciful;* if he is merciful he will pardon the penitent by free grace, and without the intercession of the priest. When I cease to believe this I deny God, and consequently am no more in need of the sacraments.

Henry. But it appears to me that the saving power of the Church must be more unfailing than the saving power of your confidence in the grace of God.

Antonio. I do not think so: if I have no firm trust and faith in the grace of God, I can have no confidence that the power of the sacraments will obtain grace with God for me; for in case God refuse to pardon the sinner the sacraments have no efficacy, unless you suppose them to operate as charms to compel the Almighty to mercy. I must therefore, even in the orthodox Church, have trust or confidence in the grace of God, or no sacrament will tranquillize me.

Henry. Whether it tranquillize you or not, whether you confide in it or not, it will still prove effi-

cacious. Here lies the great fund of consolation, that the sacrament avails even him who puts no trust in it, as a medicine heals the sick man even when he hopes nothing from it.

Antonio. That would be all very well if it were certain, and had by any means been pledged to me, and if the efficacy of the sacraments were not still dependent on another faith, of which I can never be sure, namely, on the faith of the priest who administers them. You know the Church teaches that every sacrament is only then efficacious when the officiating priest has the *intention* to administer a sacrament. I do not know how to express this.

Henry. You might say, has the *will* or the *disposition* to administer a Christian sacrament.

Antonio. The holy council firmly maintains the necessity of this intention when (in the 11th canon of the 7th session) it is said—"If any one maintain that it is not required of the priest when he administers the sacraments, to have the intention, at least the intention of performing what the Church performs, *let him be cursed.*" This appears to me a very dubious case. Of my own faith I can be certain, for I know what passes in my soul; but how can I be sure of the priest's intention? If he was absent in mind when he baptized, confirmed, absolved, or administered extreme unction to me, all these sacraments might as well have not been performed over me. Who will be responsible to me that the priest has the right intention? You know that what men perform daily becomes at length so habitual that it is done without reflection. But it is still worse, if the priest himself does not believe in the efficacy of the sacrament. Now, as there are no means in the world by which I can assure myself whether the priest has had the right intention, it remains for ever doubtful whether the power of the sacraments has benefited me; and though I may have honestly performed my part, it may easily happen that I have been deceived. It is

a very grievous case, that we cannot obtain our salvation immediately from God, but that the priest must, as it were, form a contract with the Almighty, and that the whole contract is void if the priest commit any error in the forms.

Henry. Antonio! Antonio! Your observations disturb me! The principal reason why I became a Roman Catholic Christian was, because I believed myself more secure of my salvation in the Catholic Church than in the Protestant, where I was referred to my own faith; but I see that it is still more dangerous to be dependent on the faith of another, of which we can never be certain. Go now, leave me I beseech you, I wish to be alone!

Antonio, (sorrowfully.) I communicated my joy to you on having found the answer to the question which had so long perplexed me, and I hoped to give you pleasure. Why cannot you rejoice with me, my dear Henry? The words of the Saviour refer also to you—keep the commandments, and thou shalt have life! Hold fast to these words, and banish every thing else from your thoughts. I should think you might surely put equal, yea, more confidence in the words of your Saviour himself than in those of his vicegerent in Rome.

Henry. You are right, my friend, I will do so. Now I beg of you to leave me.

Antonio complied with his request. Henry was much agitated by this conversation with the young Italian. We have seen the disposition of mind which had led him to the Roman Church; he had hoped to be there perfectly secure of his salvation, when it no more depended on his own faith; he felt that in this respect, far from gaining, he had lost; and to this was added the painful sensation that he had deceived himself in the object of his change of faith: still he could not be displeased with his friend: he was well aware that Antonio had no other instructor than the New Testament, and he could not deny that his sound un-

derstanding had led him into a path which he lamented that he himself had not sooner chosen. A slight displeasure arose in his mind when he reflected that his first master, or at least the clergyman who had prepared him for confirmation, had not explained to him the Holy Scriptures in reference to the Roman Catholic Church; for he felt that he should not have taken the step which had set him at variance with his family, and gradually with his own heart, if the Gospel had been so explained to him as Antonio explained it to himself. The latter, who read it as a Roman Catholic, seized every word in reference to his own Church, and, therefore, easily observed that which the Protestant, unacquainted with Catholicism, is apt to overlook, and which will, therefore, not occur to him when efforts to detach him from his Church are subsequently made. Henry lamented that the philosophical studies to which he had so zealously devoted himself at the University had caused him entirely to neglect the New Testament, and he secretly determined to have recourse to it, in the hope of finding in its simple and clear language a thread to lead him out of the labyrinth of theological and philosophical subtleties. Meantime he again referred to the essay which he had composed in Frankfort, in which he had laid down the grounds of his transition. He certainly found that many points which he had formerly noted as indisputable had dwindled into nothing; but he still discovered others which appeared undeniable, and animated him with renewed courage. The subject of the following evening's conversation, in particular, seemed placed beyond all doubt, namely, the proposition that the Roman Catholic alone can be the true Apostolical Church.

CHAPTER IX.

THE family assembled in the evening to their usual familiar conversation, at which, according to agreement, Bernhard also was present, but on condition that he should only when asked give his opinion upon the point that chanced to be discussed: with this he was perfectly satisfied. From his short acquaintance with Henry, he had convinced himself that he had become Roman Catholic only from misunderstood religious wants, and had thereby only obeyed sincere conviction; he was, therefore, of opinion, that such a disposition of mind deserved indulgence, and that he must not be assailed violently if he were to be restored to the Church which he had relinquished. He had even formed a strong hope that Henry could be recovered; as he had not become a Roman Catholic from base motives, but from conviction. With respect to those who have been converted by self-interest, policy, or indifference to all religion, he thought it vain to attempt to convince them that they have exchanged truth for falsehood: for this they must have known at their conversion, and the truth was no object to them.

Henry's friends called upon him to lay before them the grounds on which he considered the Roman Catholic, *as the only true and only Apostolical Church.*

"You will own," said Henry, "that Jesus, or at least his Apostles, founded a Church, which is an outward community of Christians, united by the same faith, the same rites, and the same discipline. Of this Church Jesus saith (St. Matt. xvi. 18.) that "the

gates (or the power) of hell shall not prevail against it." The Church founded by the Apostles cannot, therefore, fall; it must still exist, and it alone can be the true Church of Christ. The question is, where is it to be found? Not in the Protestant Churches, which have existed only three hundred years, and we know their founders, viz. Luther in Saxony, and Zwinglius in Switzerland. But no man knows a founder of the Roman Catholic Church; her origin and the regular succession of her bishops may be traced to the Apostles themselves, she is, therefore, the Church which was personally founded by the Apostles, and consequently is, without doubt, the true Church, to which alone all the promises and privileges which Jesus gave to his Church must be referred; she, and she alone, is, therefore, in possession of true Christianity, of a legitimate priesthood, of the right discipline, and the true means of salvation. All, therefore, as the Lutherans and reformed, who have separated themselves from her, are excluded from the true Church of God, and must, therefore, be regarded as heretics. These propositions appear to me so true and consistent that I know of nothing which can be opposed to them; and I will, therefore, wait to hear what you, my friends, have to allege against them.

Father. You have here introduced two very different propositions as if they were one and the same, and have connected them both with the idea of a *Church.* If you say "Jesus has founded a Church which cannot fall," you speak of the whole community of Christians, or of *Christianity,* which includes the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Greek Churches as *parts* of it. Christianity, or the Church of churches, was of course founded by Jesus and his Apostles, because it could have had no other origin. It is Christianity which cannot and ought not to fall; the Roman Catholic, the Protestant *Churches, &c.* have only developed themselves out of it in the course of time. When you speak of the *truth* of the Church, and apply

this expression to the *origin* of *Christianity*, it must be the *Christianity* founded by *Christ*, and not the Roman Catholic, the Greek, and Protestant forms, into which it has been since split. In the latter sense an *untrue* Church would be no better than a Church that was not Christian, than Mahomedanism, Judaism, the Church of Fohi in China, or of Dalai Lama in Tartary. With regard to its origin from Jesus and his Apostles, *Christianity* is, therefore, the true Church.

Henry. That is certainly not my meaning; but I consider the Roman Catholic as the true Church, because she alone was personally founded by Jesus and his Apostles; but I must certainly confess that I do not by the word Church mean *Christianity*, or all communities of Christians, but only the Roman Catholic Church existing under the Pope.

Father. Then it was wrong in you to set out with the idea of Christianity, and yet in the course of your conclusions to intend by the word Church only the Roman Catholic Church: you know that all conclusions are false when a main proposition is understood in different senses.

Henry. By the rules of logic that is indisputable; I will, therefore, put my proposition thus: the true Church among existing churches can be that alone which, as the oldest, was founded personally by Jesus and his Apostles, and from which all other churches have originally separated themselves.

Father. You have now worded your proposition correctly, but it has still no meaning; you lay stress upon the fact that the Roman Catholic Church was founded *personally* by the Apostles: if this is to be the criterion of the true Church, then the churches of those towns and countries only where the Apostles themselves lived and taught, can form the true Church; and the Roman Catholic Churches in Germany, Ireland, Poland, and throughout America do not belong to the Church, because these churches were

not founded by the Apostles personally, but by other Christian teachers.

Henry. They are, however, Apostolical, for they have received the Apostolical instructions through intermediate persons from the true Church.

Father. You must therefore own, Henry, that it is all one whether the Apostles founded a Church through their *personal oral* or their *personal written* instructions, and that the intermediate persons who convey to such a Church the instructions of the Apostles, do not deprive it of an Apostolical constitution: the Gospel which these persons convey, and not they themselves, properly speaking, founds the new Church. It was thus at the founding of the Protestant Church; she was a branch which grew out of the Roman Catholic Church, and received from and shared with her the Holy Scriptures, the three general creeds, and much more, renouncing only what appeared contrary to the written instructions of the Apostles. The Reformers did not found our Church, it was founded by the Gospel, which they brought again to light from the obscurity in which it had been involved. They were only the intermediate persons, the missionaries of the Gospel, and, therefore, the united Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Germany justly call themselves the Evangelical Church. The Church founded by the *written* instructions of the Evangelists and Apostles is more certainly a true Church than one founded by *oral* instruction, because the written doctrine is more secure and more certain than the oral one, which has passed the lips of so many different teachers. The former flowed directly from the minds of the Apostles into their unaltered writings, the latter into the minds of different men for centuries together, of whom it may be naturally supposed that each would frame it according to his own peculiar conceptions.

Henry. The difference, dear father, consists in this, that the churches founded by the Roman Catholic Church received also the constitution of the

Roman Catholic Church, and are thereby perfectly united with her; but the Protestant Churches have made material alterations. In judging of the genuineness of a church all depends upon her *constitution*.

Father. You see, therefore, Henry, that when we speak of the true Church we are not to inquire after her Apostolical *origin*, but to ask if she have the right *constitution*; and, therefore, that the question, which among the existing churches is the true one, can have no other meaning than this, which is the best; i. e. *which answers most perfectly the design of the establishment of a Christian Church.* What *aim* do you assign to Christianity in general?

Henry. We are already agreed upon this point, that its aim is to deliver men from the dominion and punishment of sin. The Church is the means to this end.

Father. Right: therefore that church alone will be the true one which answers this aim, and is thus adapted not only to *tranquillize* men concerning the punishment of their sins, but to release them from the *dominion* or *service* of sin. Our inquiry, therefore, is not which is the *older* but which is the *better* church, i. e. the best adapted to fulfil the design of Christianity. Consequently our Augsburg Confession of Faith says very properly, "the true Church is there where the Gospel is rightly taught, and the sacraments are administered according to the direction of Christ." If it should be found that the Protestant Church best answers the design of Christianity, she must be the truest or the *best* Church; but the Roman Catholic Church must be a less true, or even a false Church, if she answers this end in a less degree, or be entirely opposed to it.

Henry. It is not possible, dear father, that the Roman Catholic Church, as the oldest, can become corrupt, for she has the Spirit of God, is infallible, and the only one among all other churches which is protected against errors of faith and practice.

Father. Experience contradicts this. Jesus himself said beforehand, that many false teachers would arise in the Church; the Apostles experienced this, and not a century has passed in which disputes have not arisen concerning faith and practice. Councils have decided upon some of the contested subjects, but not in the same sense; other points of difference have remained undecided. The earlier Church herself made regulations, but afterwards abolished them; for instance, the feasts of love, and the administration of the Holy Sacrament to children. You, therefore, see the possibility that the Church founded by the Apostles may, in the course of time, become corrupt. But if such corruptions arise, if, for instance, the Church institute so many expiatory rites, that it is no longer necessary actually to relinquish sin, but it is sufficient for a man to declare that he intends to do so; if in the worship of God, instruction and edification are only secondary objects, and ceremonies the main point; if superstitious rites, as the worship of saints and images, be introduced and treated as the most important things; if the constitution of the Church be so formed, that the Church itself no longer exists for Christianity, but for the priesthood; if every thing, therefore, be changed, and in the place of Christ the Pope appears, and in the place of the Church the priesthood, then the Church herself is also changed, and no longer answers the aim of religion, but the designs of the priesthood. In such a case the *right*, yea, the *duty* devolves upon Christian communities to reform the Church and to abolish the abuses that have crept into it. I might call this a *reformation-night*. This was effectually done about three hundred years ago by many communities of western Christians, and thus was the Protestant Church founded. After emperors and kings had often before in vain urged reformation of the "*head* and *members*," as they expressed it, that is, of the pope and clergy, and the popes had defeated these attempts, as well as the en-

deavours of two great and general councils of the fifteenth century at Constance and Basil, *that* at length happened to which the Church had a natural right, she reformed herself, and attached herself to Luther, Zwinglius, and other pious men, who shewed out of the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles how the Church should be properly constituted. These men did not bring about the reformation, but the *general will* effected it, which had recourse to the Gospel or to the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, which was proclaimed again by the Reformers to the Christian communities. Since the popes, instead of offering the right hand of fellowship to the Reformers, put them and all their followers under *Bann*, and excommunicated them; being thus unjustly excluded from the Church, they were perfectly justified in forming themselves into a new Christian community or Church, which was called the *Evangelical*, because it was grounded upon the Gospel. The legitimacy of the rise of the Protestant Church necessarily was grounded upon her right of reforming herself. The intermediate person of a reformer would never have been necessary, if the popes had preferred the honour of God and of Christ to their own worldly power. It, therefore, admits of no dispute that the Protestant Church is a Christian and Apostolical Church, and that as she is reformed according to the Gospel, she is the true Church, and approaches nearer to the constitution of the true Church at least than the Roman Catholic Church, which rigidly retains and eternizes all the defects and abuses which rendered the Reformation necessary.

Henry. If I allow this, the stumbling-block still remains,—that she is not *Catholic*, and has separated herself from the *first Church* established by the Apostles, which is united under the Roman bishop as its *primate*.

Father. Concerning the meaning of the word *Catholic* I must beg for an explanation from Bernhard.

Henry. I can give it you myself. Catholic is a Greek word, and signifies *general*. The expression was used by the Church in the second and third centuries, on account of some false teachers, to whom it was objected that all other Christian communities except theirs taught differently, and that, therefore, their doctrine, as contradictory to the *general* doctrine, could not possibly be the true one.

Bernhard. That is right; but it must also be observed that the term *Catholic Church* did not comprehend all Christian communities then in existence, but all congregations in the Roman empire, or the Church of the empire. The ὅλη ἡ οἰκουμένη, whence Catholic is derived, often signifies the Roman empire, therefore an œcumenical council was in reality not a council of all Christian teachers, even from Ethiopia, Persia, India, and Arabia, but of the bishops of the empire only. Under these circumstances alone it is conceivable that the Roman emperors Constantine and Theodosius the Great were able to summon a *general* or œcumenian council, that is, a *council of the empire*, and to give to its decrees a legislative power. And the title *Œcumenical Bishop*, (which I will here at once mention) which the bishops of Rome arrogated to themselves, and which was at last conceded to them, signified no more than the *chief bishops* of *the Roman empire*, but by no means, as it has been since attempted to explain it, a general or sole bishop of all Christendom. You are acquainted, dear Henry, with the Greek idiom, and, therefore, know how ὅλη ἡ οἰκουμένη was used.

Henry. I cannot contradict this.

Bernhard. Catholic Church, therefore, signified originally no more than the Church of the empire, i. e. of the Roman empire. When the Roman empire afterwards split into two great divisions, the Western and Eastern, or the Latin and Greek empires, two Catholic, i. e. imperial churches, the Western and Eastern, were naturally formed: the latter, or the

Greek Church, still continued after her separation from the Western Church to call herself Catholic, i. e. Church of the empire; and the Latin Church did not object to her using this title. It was only after the destruction of the Western empire, in the ignorance of the middle ages, that the term Catholic Church began to be used in the sense *general, sole*, and consequently the only true Church; although after the fall of the Roman empire there could not, properly speaking, exist a Catholic Church, or Church of the empire. *Roman Catholic Church*, therefore, denoted properly the Christian Church of the Latin-Roman empire, and thus far bore a correct sense; but if Catholic, as now used, be made to signify the general church of all parts of the world, or the general Church, then Roman Catholic is as great a contradiction as if we were to say '*wooden iron*,' since not only the Eastern but the Protestant Church has been formed; and *Roman*, now after the dissolution of the Roman empire, is limited *to that particular church* which acknowledges *the Bishop of Rome* as her head. Roman Catholic, therefore, in these days, signifies *Roman, particular, general Church*, which is a perfect contradiction.

Henry. I had not viewed this in that light, and must own that no value can be set on the title Catholic, nay, that by a great change of political circumstances it can no longer have any meaning. But if I look upon the Roman Catholic Church as a particular Church, you must, however, own that she is the oldest, and arose directly from the travels and labours of the Apostles. And this is still a privilege. The Protestant Churches are all new, founded only three hundred years ago, and the promise of Christ that his Spirit should guide his Church cannot be applied to them.

Father. I am well aware that you Roman Catholics have this saying always on your lips, that "where the Church of God is there the Spirit of God is also, and that whosoever separates himself from the

Church forfeits all communion with the Spirit of God." But you are mistaken; the Spirit of God is not confined to the Pope of Rome and the Christian community that belongs to him. Not a word of this is said in Scripture; but you ought rather to say, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, and his influence is felt, there the Church of God is.* I do not feel myself united with Christ, the head by the members, but with the members by the head. What you observe concerning the antiquity of the Roman Catholic Church, and the modern date of Protestantism is already refuted in our foregoing remarks. There are old errors and new truths; every point must, therefore, be decided according to its intrinsic truth, and not according to its age. Christianity was once new; and so was every truth which is now old to us*.

Henry. But is it no advantage to the Roman Catholic Church, that she is the oldest?

Father. She by no means is so. Read the New Testament, and you will form a juster conception of the origin of the *Christian* Church, (for the Roman Papal Church cannot come in question.) That the Church originated in the Roman Empire, was not the choice of the Apostles; it happened necessarily, because they lived in this empire. They founded individual Churches wherever they could, especially in Asia Minor and Greece; and, therefore, in countries which do not belong to the present Roman, but to the Greek Church. If any Church could claim the title of *universal Church*, as descended immediately from the Apostles, it would be the eastern, or the Greek Church; for the first congregations were formed, and many of them, certainly, by the Apostles, in her provinces in Egypt, Syria, Pisidia, Paphlagonia, Galatia,—in Greece, Thrace, Macedon. If the truth of the Church followed from her antiquity, the eastern, or Greek Church would be the true one, and the Roman the

* See Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix III.

false one. For, perhaps there is not one of the Latin Churches which can, with *perfect security*, derive its origin from an Apostle. A congregation was certainly formed at Rome, during the life of the Apostles, as we learn from the Epistle which St. Paul addressed to it; but it had been formed before the arrival of an Apostle there. The congregations distributed through the whole Roman Empire, whether formed by the Apostles or by others, constituted the first Church. But they had no external bond of union. They sent to and wrote to each other; but they had no common Church discipline. This, and the form of a community, externally united and cemented, and, consequently, the form of a Church, they first received in the fourth century, when they were publicly acknowledged as a Church in the empire, viz. when Constantine the Great became a Christian, when he summoned the Bishops to a council of the empire, when Church discipline was established under him according to the political division of the empire. That, Henry, was not the Roman Church, as it exists under the *Pope*, but the *Church of the Empire*, which comprehended all the congregations of the Roman Empire, and had the *Emperor*, and not a Bishop, at its head. The Bishop of Rome only then became Patriarch, and enjoyed the same rights as the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, which were the five Patriarchates, and obtained precedence before them only in later times. But he, as well as the rest, was subject to the emperors *.

Henry. So the Roman Bishops were not then Popes, and did not then govern the Church?

Father. Answer him, Bernhard, upon this point.

Bernhard. What your father says is in perfect unison with history. The Bishops of Rome were very early held in high respect, as they were the Bishops of the metropolis of a mighty empire. The splendour

* See the Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix XXXVI.

of the city threw its radiance over them also; but they were not lords of the Church, but were on an equality *with the other great bishops**. Every Bishop was called Papa, *Pope*, i. e. Father, especially the patriarchs of Alexandria; and every Church, founded by an Apostle, assumed the title of Sedes Apostolica, or *Apostolical Chair*. It was the Roman Bishop, Gregory the Seventh, with whom the Popedom began, in the eleventh century, who first arrogated to himself exclusively, the title of Papa, (Pope), although the eastern bishops did not recognise this claim. The Roman Church, in the present sense of the word, as it denotes Christian communities who acknowledge the Roman Bishop as Pope, or head of the Church, first arose in the middle of the eleventh century, under the Roman Bishop, Gregory the Seventh, whilst the eastern Christians, because they would not acknowledge the supremacy which the Roman Bishop arrogated, separated themselves from the Roman Church, publicly and solemnly, in the year 1059. The *Roman Papal Church*, therefore, first took its origin a thousand years after Christ.—When the Protestants separated themselves from the Roman Church, in the sixteenth century, they did not leave the old, but a new Church, which had been only formed about five centuries previously, and they returned to the old Church.

Henry. But has not Jesus declared the Apostle St. Peter to be the head of his Church? and has not St. Peter, when he was Bishop of Rome, transmitted this power to the Roman Bishops, as his successors? Has not the office of the Roman Bishop, as president, been always recognised in the Church? Had not the Roman Bishops, therefore, immediately from the beginning, the right to be Popes?

Father. This error has been so often and so completely refuted, that it is almost superfluous still to

* See the Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix IV.

add any thing upon the subject. You ground your pretext upon the words of Christ, (St. Matt. xvi. 18.) "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Ver. 19. "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The words of the 19th verse, concerning the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we will now lay aside; partly, because we are already agreed (chap. vi.) upon their meaning, and partly, because they contain no privilege for St. Peter above the other Apostles; as the Saviour (St. Matt. xviii. 18. St. John xx. 23.) says the same to all the Apostles: only the words of the 18th verse still remain for our consideration. According to the custom of ancient times, Jesus gave another name to Simon; he called him Peter. St. Paul also was first called Saul, and St. Matthew, Levi. For this change of name, which was, therefore, usual, St. Peter's qualities, viz. his courage and his fortitude, gave Jesus occasion to compare him to a rock. David also calls God his Rock, on which he trusts. The Saviour, therefore, says, "On this firmness of disposition, which will neither yield to Pharisees and Scribes, nor be moved by any persecutions, I intend to build a lasting Church;" or, "at the founding of my Church, thou shalt distinguish thyself above all others by thy courage and activity." But that St. Peter should be *Lord* of the Church, or even chief of the Apostles, the Saviour has given no intimation. What Jesus said was only a proof of what he expected from the character and courage of the Apostle. The words contain neither commission nor privilege; and if we were to infer either from them, we should act as arbitrarily as if, from another expression of Christ to St. Peter, (St. Matt. xvi. 23. "But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of

God, but the things that be of men,") we were to conclude that he had excluded St. Peter for ever from his Church.

Henry. I own that Jesus gives no commission, or plenary power to St. Peter, in these words, but that they only shew what he expected from him: it is, however, undeniable, that, in another passage, he committed to St. Peter the supremacy of the Church, or the chief episcopal office; for we read that he said thrice to St. Peter, after his resurrection, (John xxi. 15.) "Feed my lambs."

Father. But he does not say, thou *alone* shalt feed my lambs. He does not exclude the other Apostles from this commission. The whole charge rather shews that St. Peter was to be thereby excited to discharge the duties of an Apostle anew. He had thrice denied Jesus, and he must have understood the thrice-repeated question, "Simon, lovest thou me?" to refer to that circumstance. After the death of Jesus he had betaken himself again to his former employment of a fisherman on the lake of Tiberias, and, therefore, stood much in need of the renewed encouragement, "Feed my lambs:" i. e. Leave thy employment and devote thyself to the work of an Apostle. The words of Jesus do not signify, thou shalt be the chief of the Apostles, and the sole Bishop of all future Christians.

Henry. But do we not learn from the Acts of the Apostles, that the other Apostles always paid particular deference to St. Peter; and that he always stood at their head?

Father. A distinguished Apostle he certainly was, because he possessed both spirit and power; but a head of his co-Apostles or of the whole Church, he certainly was not. Of this you find no trace, but clear proof of the contrary *. St. Paul (Gal. ii. 9.) mentions *James*, *Peter*, and *John*, as those who "seemed pillars;" and, therefore, pays the *same* deference to the

* See the Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix VI.

three. St. Paul was chosen by Jesus as an Apostle of the heathens, and the other Apostles (Gal. ii. 9.) acknowledged him as such, and declared that they would confine themselves to the Jews alone. If we, therefore, wished to draw the same conclusions as the Roman Church does, we might maintain that St. Peter was head only of the Jewish Christians, but that St. Paul was head of the Heathen Christians.

Henry. But if St. Peter had no pre-eminence over the other Apostles and the Church, he could not transmit it to the Bishops of Rome*.

Father. Nor has he done this. If Jesus actually gave him, in St. Matt. xvi. 18. a privilege above the other Apostles, he gave it him on account of his personal qualities, by which he resembled a rock. As personal qualities cannot be bequeathed, this privilege of St. Peter could not be transmitted to others. It must have ceased at his death, or would then have been communicated rather to the Apostle St. John, still living, than to the Bishop of Rome.

Mother. On the whole I cannot believe but that the Saviour would have spoken more distinctly, if he had intended to make St. Peter head of the Church. Privileges of such infinite importance and consequence to Christianity, would not have been conferred in a short figurative phrase, "Thou art a Rock, and I will build my Church upon it." I should think the Saviour might have said, without difficulty, "Thou shalt be head of my Church, and be able at thy death to bequeath thy dominion to the Bishops of Rome." Why did not the Saviour so express himself, if he had the remotest intention of such a thing? But in the discourses of Christ, and the writings of the Apostles, we read only of *one* Head of the Church, and that is Christ himself. Your assertion, dear Henry, that you of the Church of Rome alone can be true Christians, because you adhere to the Pope, and pre-

* See the Testimonials of the Fathers, Appendix VII.

tend to derive your descent from the first Church, reminds me of a similar assertion of the Jews, (St. John viii. 37—45.) that they were the true children of God, because they were descended from Abraham. The Lord said unto them, they would be then only the children of Abraham when they performed the works of Abraham, i. e. were as pious as Abraham. Thus he will acknowledge those only as true Christians who earnestly endeavour to resemble him in disposition, whether they be under the dominion of the Pope or not. I should think, dear Henry, we might thus settle this point, and dispense with learned investigations, whether or not the Bishop of Rome was acknowledged as head of Christendom in the early Church.

Henry. Perhaps it might be as well. I must confess that such an acknowledgement of the Pope cannot be proved. I have read the writings of the earliest Fathers, and own that I could find nothing which establishes a recognition of the Roman primate. Although I have learnt that the Church of Rome, as one of the oldest and most distinguished churches, was held in great esteem, I could not, however, discover that jurisdiction over the Church was assigned to her Bishop.

Bernhard. This remark, dear Henry, is very just and impartial. There is a great difference whether we shew respect to a Church, and inquire after her confession of faith, because she is one of the oldest and most distinguished, or whether we esteem her because her Bishop is Head of the Church.

Henry. If, as I now own, the supremacy of the Pope be not grounded upon the New Testament, nor found in the first centuries, it is, however, so necessary to the Church, that a Pope ought to be appointed, if he did not already exist; and, as he does exist, it is wrong to reject him. For, in the first place, there must be a central point in the Church, to bind and consolidate it, if the whole is to be kept from splitting

into small divisions, which become at length more and more dissimilar. There must be, therefore, unity of Church discipline, a central point of faith, and, therefore, the very desideratum, which we possess in the Pope.

Father. You here mingle much together, which we must separate. What do you call a centre of the unity of faith?

Henry. One who can pronounce the final judgment upon all contested points of faith, and thereby preserve peace in the Church; or who, if this peace be disturbed can again restore it.

Father. Have your Popes been able to do that?

Henry. Not entirely; they have, however, in most cases preserved the unity of faith.

Father. They have not been able to prevent, but have, rather, been the cause of the separation of the whole eastern Church from the western; they have not been able, since they founded their hierarchy in the eleventh century, to prevent the existence of Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites, and they have not been able to restrain the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Jesuits from disputing, in the bitterest terms, concerning the immaculate conception of the Virgin, concerning original sin, and growing grace; and these disputes remain undecided to this day; they have not been able to hinder or set aside Quietism, and the Jansenian controversies in the French Church; nor the fundamental point started at the Councils of Constance and Basil, that the Pope is subject to a General Council; nor have they been able to prevent the great and mighty Reformation, by which almost half of the west freed itself from the yoke of Rome. What has your centre of unity of faith availed you?

Henry. Much, however; for the Popes alone were able, amidst the rage of parties, to bind and preserve the greatest part of the Church in unity by their influence. If there had been no Popes, the whole Church must have dissolved into sects.

Father. Say, rather, if there had been no Popes, the Reformation would have been general, and the whole western Church would have moulded itself into a Protestant Church. You say, we have a centre of the unity of faith, the *Pope*, to whose decisions all must submit; we have also a centre of the unity of faith, the *Gospel* of Jesus, the decisions of which every Protestant Christian obeys.

Henry. But we have an advantage over the Protestants, for with them every individual explains the Gospel as he pleases; but the decisions of the Pope are subject to no comment. You, therefore, have many interpretations, we but one.

Father. The difference is, rather, that we obey the revealed Word of God, while the Roman Catholics submit to that of an erring man, and are compelled to recognise and declare as good and true, whatever the Roman Bishops think proper; and these have thought proper to exalt as the first article of faith, that they are the unlimited lords of the Church and of all Christendom, and that it is the greatest sin not to believe and obey them. The difference is, further, that the Gospel contains a complete summary of truth, but that the creed the Roman Catholics may receive, through the Pope, an ever new, and frequently an unwelcome addition. The difference is, further, that, with us, the difference of religious opinions is adjusted by arguments and the power of truth; but, with you, by banns and punishments. For by what means have the Popes then attempted to preserve the unity of faith? Think of the dreadful and terrific wars of extirpation, which the Popes excited against the Albigenses and Waldenses, of the Crusades, whereby the Stedinger were exterminated; of that monster, the Inquisition, which, according to the authentic accounts of the unfortunate Llorente, burnt alive in Spain alone, from the year 1481 to 1808, 32,381 human beings, and incarcerated and stripped of their property 291,450; think of the cruelties which were permitted

in England, under the bigoted Mary, for the introduction of Popery; of the bloody St. Bartholomew's night, in commemoration of which the Pope instituted spiritual festivals; of the thirty-years' war in Germany, kindled by the Jesuits; of the cruelties with which the Reformation was oppressed in Austria and Bohemia; and of all the bloodshed which stains your Church, and accuses her as deeply blood-guilty before God; and then boast still, that it is the Pope that preserves peace and concord in the Church. A fine centre of the unity of faith, who can only act by fire and sword *!

Henry. You here lay much to the charge of the Pope, which, perhaps, was only occasioned by the indiscreet zeal of princes.

Father. You know very well that the Popes kindled the wars against the Waldenses and the Protestants, and that, in the seven years' war, the Pope sent to the orthodox Austrian General Daun, a consecrated *hat* and *sword*, that he might extirpate the heretical King of Prussia; you know also, that the Popes introduced the Inquisition, that Innocent the IVth. increased its severity, and that they commanded and promoted it every where. Hear, moreover, how the Father of Christendom wrote to the King of France, in the year 1713, on transmitting to him the bull "Unigenitus:" "The kingdom of heaven (i. e. *the Roman Catholic Church,*) has, by her temporal power, this advantage, that such as act in her contrary to the articles of faith and all order of the Church, are *crushed by the severity* of temporal princes, and the punishments which *the Church herself* (the Pope) *cannot execute*, are laid upon the necks of the proud by the power of princes."

Henry. Do you then believe that the unity of faith can be preserved without a Pope?

Father. I do believe it; and that it is very practi-

* See the Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix VIII.

cable I learn from the Greek Church, which has no Pope.

Henry. But who decides, then, in religious disputes?

Father. These may be decided, as they were for almost a thousand years before there existed a Pope. Let every sovereign summon a national council to decide the case. The greatest contests on points of faith in the ancient Church, were thus determined during nine hundred years. But it is still better to leave different opinions to rectify themselves, when truth will, inevitably, always prevail. This is the will of the Saviour. He compares (St. Matt. xiii. 24—30.) the Church to a field, in which the householder sows the wheat of truth, amongst which, however, the enemy strews the tares of error. The servants wished to *gather up* the tares, as the Pope does, to extirpate heretics and heresy; but the householder said, "*let both grow together till the harvest.*" The erring, if they cannot be brought to the truth by instruction, should, therefore, be endured till the day of judgment.

Henry. But there must be unity, at least, in *Church-discipline*, and this cannot be maintained without a common head.

Father. Before there existed Popes, the Roman emperors regulated Church-discipline. Let it continue so; let every prince regulate it in his own dominions. The Church will thus best prosper. A discipline which extends itself to all Christians of the four quarters of the world, is not practicable, and extremely expensive and inconvenient.

Mother. I adhere to St. Paul, who mentions another centre of the unity of faith, not the Pope, but Christ. He writes to the Ephesians, (Ephes. ii. 20, 21.) "And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief *corner-stone* (the centre of unity), in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." The same Apostle, in chap. iv.

where he maintains the unity of the Church, says not a word of the Pope, or the Vicegerent of Christ, but specifies, in ver. 11, the offices of the Church thus, "And he gave some *apostles*, and some *prophets*, and some *evangelists*, and some *pastors* and *teachers*." But that he ordained one, as head of them all, a Pope, of this the Apostle says not a word.

Henry. This is true, dear mother; but it is of the greatest advantage to the Church to have a spiritual head, who is equal in rank to kings and emperors, or exalted even above them, who, by the independent possession of a considerable territory, ranks with the rulers of the world, and is invested with all the splendour of a sovereign. It is of the greatest advantage that the Cardinals and Archbishops who surround him, have a princely rank and authority, and that the Bishops sign themselves as sovereign princes do, "by the grace of God," and have the rank of nobility. This elevated hierarchy forms a strong chain, which reaches from the lowest hut to the most exalted throne, binds the whole together, and secures to the Church her splendour, her independence of temporal princes, and her great influence over the minds of the people. This exalted hierarchy is, by her rank, every where among the great of the earth; she sits among kings and princes. The ears, the hearts of the mighty are open to her; she learns to know and to avail herself of their weaknesses. See, on the other hand, the poor Protestant clergy in Germany, how they stand among the common people, remote from the great of the earth, excluded from the smallest court, and how the highest dignitary among them has, at court, only the rank of a gentleman of the bed-chamber. Is it greatly to be wondered at, that, since the Reformation, so many princes, counts, and noblemen have become Roman Catholics? Really, posterity will witness all the princes of Europe, and the remaining great families, become Catholics. The advantage, therefore, which the Church derives from the dignity of the Pope

and the other ecclesiastics, is, certainly, very important. Of what consequence to the Pope, who is himself a powerful independent prince, is the opposition of another sovereign? If the latter wishes to obtain any thing in ecclesiastical affairs from him, he must send his ambassador to him as to another potentate; and the Head of the Church treats with him as with his equal, as one power with another. If any thing is asked, which is contrary to the interest of the Church, the case is rejected without delay, and the concession is ultimately made on the part of the temporal prince. With what dignity did not the Head of the Church appear, when, after the conquest of Vienna, many German princes sent an embassy to Rome, to negotiate a *concordat* for their Roman Catholic subjects! Eight weeks was the embassy obliged to wait before they could open their proposals even to Cardinal Consalvi, then Secretary of State. He returned to them the document, and had marked with a pencil the alterations which must be made before the case could be laid before the Holy Father. At last, the business proceeded so far, that their case was represented to the Pope, who did not hasten with his answer; and, when the ambassadors urged for it, declared that he could not enter into the affair, with which reply they were obliged to leave Rome. How is it, on the contrary, in Protestant countries, when the sovereign wishes to obtain any thing? He commands, and must be obeyed, however reluctantly, by the clergy. Do but own that the Protestant Church is at the mercy of every sovereign, but the Roman Catholic Church stands free and independent in the world, because she has a Pope. I have, therefore, great reason to say, that a Pope ought to be appointed, if he did not already exist.

Father. In your observations there is truth mixed with error: it is true that the Protestant Church on the Continent has no protection if the sovereign should attempt any thing that was injurious to her; and it

would be well to adopt such precautions as would at once suit the dignity of the crown and that of the Church. But a Roman Catholic Church and a Pope are not necessary for this purpose, but councils only, which are now introduced into many Protestant countries. Besides, the experience of three centuries, in Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, has taught us that the Protestant Church runs no danger from the power of her Protestant sovereigns, and that she was in general only then oppressed when her sovereigns either were or became Roman Catholic. It is also true that the Protestant hierarchy is in too little esteem and consideration in the State, that it is excluded from all intercourse with princes, ministers, and the great nobility, by its want of rank, and cannot, therefore, counteract the proselyting efforts of the high Roman Catholic ecclesiastics, who are amalgamated with the court. But this is only the case in Germany, not in England, Sweden, and Denmark; and even in Germany Prussia has, by the restoration of Protestant episcopacy, advanced a step towards improvement. But it does not follow that because it is not right to class the clergy with the lower ranks and populace, it is, therefore, necessary to make them princes and sovereigns. The latter extreme is as injudicious and injurious as the former; the medium is best: it is, however, clear that it does not become him who pretends to be the father of all Christendom to have a temporal kingdom also. He who will be sole bishop of all Christendom is surely so much occupied with his own office, that he ought not to burden himself with the weight of a temporal government. Your Pope will thereby be only involved in political contests, and placed in embarrassments between the interests of the Church and those of his political kingdom; he and his cardinals and archbishops are always more politicians than ecclesiastics, more lawyers than theologians, more learned in the affairs of this world than in those relating to the kingdom of heaven. Go

through the history of the popes, and you will find that they were involved, without end, in political disputes, and played, in truth, no very honourable part in them. Does it become those, who would represent the Apostles, to be ministers of state and generals of armies, as Richelieu and Mazarin in France, as Cardinal Sourdis, who commanded the fleet, and Cardinal la Valette, who, in the thirty years' war, commanded an army of the King of France?

Mother. We need not have recourse to history; the testimony of Jesus passes judgment upon all that you have advanced respecting the splendour of the Pope: he says expressly (St. John xviii. 36.) "My kingdom is not of this world;" and when he (St. Matt. vi. 24.) delivers the precept "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other; ye cannot serve God and Mammon," he at the same time passes sentence upon the Pope, who will be both a vicegerent of God and a temporal king. Satan (St. Luke iv. 5.) shewed to the Saviour also all the kingdoms of the world to induce him to appropriate to himself a temporal kingdom, but the Lord said "Get thee behind me, Satan." What the master refused, it does not become the servant to receive. His disciples certainly aspired after political dominion; but how did the Saviour address them when he perceived it? "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you:* but whosoever shall be great among you let him be your minister; and *whosoever will be chief* let him be your servant," (St. Matt. xx. 25—27.) It is as if the Saviour had foreseen with prophetic spirit that one of his followers would once constitute himself a Pope.

Father. The ground which we have *gained* by to-day's conversation is this, that according to the design of Jesus there ought to be no Pope, that till the

eleventh century there existed neither Pope nor Roman Church, that a Pope as a temporal prince is not adapted to the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and that the assertion is groundless, that the Roman Catholic Church was founded immediately by Christ, and is, therefore, the only true Church, and consequently the Protestant a false one.

Bernhard. On all this I offer but one remark. What were received by the Church, during the five first centuries, as public articles of faith, are contained in the three general Christian creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene, and Athanasian creeds. These confessions the Protestant Church receives also, and she, therefore, agrees with the Church of the five first centuries. If she rejects the doctrines concerning the Pope, masses, the seven sacraments, the worship of saints, and other things, she only rejects what was received later into the Church without any authority from Scripture. For of these additions those three general creeds contain nothing. So false, therefore, is the assertion that the Roman Catholic Church, as *now constituted*, is the Church of the first centuries; so unjust the reproach, that the Protestant Church has apostatized from the ancient Church; she has rather *returned* to her, and the Roman Church has apostatized from her.

CHAPTER X.

Henry's father was absent on mercantile affairs for a week, during which the conversations were discontinued. Henry found time to *weigh* in his mind all that had been said, but he arrived at no other conclusion, than that his strongest bulwarks by which he had intended to justify his conversion were no longer tenable. One point he still retained, but he feared that this could be maintained no better than the rest. He began secretly to own to himself that he had perhaps been rather premature in his conversion; and to this secret acknowledgment succeeded a regret that he had abandoned his philological studies, devoted himself to painting, and gone to seducing Rome. Before his departure for Italy he had left his collection of books in the care of his father, and since his return he had made no inquiry for them; he now went to his library in order, as he said, to pass away the time during his father's absence. He examined the books, and turned here and there the leaves of an ancient author. On the following day he had these books brought to his room, and soon afterwards was observed to read Plato with eagerness.

Antonio was astonished at this new taste of Henry's, as he had not been used to see him read Greek and Latin authors. He could not refrain from asking what the contents of these books were, and what was to be learned from them. "From these," answered Henry abruptly, "a man learns not to imagine that he knows what he does not know."

"There is nothing remarkable in that," answered Antonio, "I should have thought that was self-understood."

"You might think so," said Henry, "it is not, however, so easy, and I feel myself a perfect novice in this science."

Antonio. If it mean that we are frequently in error on points which we think we understand, then I have also a book from which I learn much of the same kind.

Henry. And that is—

Antonio, (drawing a small book out of his pocket, and giving it to Henry.) Here, this is my treasure of wisdom.

Henry. Ah! your New Testament translated by the priest *Van Ess.* Have you found any thing remarkable in it?

Antonio. Yes, something very remarkable, and I am only surprised that I was not struck with it on my first perusal.

Henry. Now let me hear.

Antonio. It is in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew; here, read it.

Henry, (after looking over it.) Is that all?

Antonio. And is not that enough, and more than enough? It is a description of Rome, of the Pope, and the Clergy.

Henry. Are you in your senses, Antonio? Who has found any thing of the kind in those words?

Antonio. *I* have: Christ's description of the Pharisees and Scribes answers exactly to the Pope and the Clergy. What was blamed as wrong in the Jewish priests must be wrong in the Christian priests also, for Jesus censures it.

Henry. There you are quite right; but what is there in the Romish priests by which they resemble the Jewish?

Antonio. If you will hear me patiently I will give you such an explanation of the whole chapter as must

satisfy you. It is as if Jesus, only in other words, spoke of Rome. Let us go through the chapter verse by verse, and allow me to translate each verse into the language and circumstances of our times. Verses 2—4. "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, (according to the decrees of Moses) that observe and do: but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not." This I paraphrase thus: "The Pope, the Cardinals, the Bishops, in one word, the Clergy sit in Christ's seat; all, therefore, that they, in conformity to the precepts of Christ, bid you observe, that do:" therefore obey them when they teach you the words of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; judge not and ye shall not be judged; blessed are the merciful, the peace-makers; love your enemies; *bless those that curse you*; bless, and curse not." But do not ye after their works, for they do not perform what Christ taught. Jesus says "Judge not, curse not your neighbour, nor even your enemy, but bless and do good;" but *they do judge* in the confessional all sinners, and all who in matters of faith differ from themselves; they curse in the most solemn manner all heretics and heresies; they have an inquisition to incarcerate and put to the rack all who doubt their assertions. Christian *high-priests* have in many of their bulls cursed in divers forms all who disobeyed them; the celebrated *Holy Thursday bull*, which is annually recited at Rome on Holy Thursday, contains nothing but curses, of which there are seventeen in number; they begin with the dreadful words "In the name of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and by the authority of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and *by our own authority*, we put under ban and curse all Hussites, Wickliffites, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Hugonots, Anabaptists, and apostates from the Christian faith; as well as all other heretics of whatsoever denomination they may be, and all such

as believe them, receive them, patronize and defend them, as well as those who knowingly read their books, or print them, or in any way, publicly or privately, under any certificate or pretext, defend them; also all schismatics, and all those who through obstinacy withdraw and separate themselves from our obedience, or from that of any future Pope." Hear, on the other hand, the Apostle St. Peter, by whose authority the bull curses, how he speaks in his first Epistle, ii. 15. "For so is the will of God that *with well doing* ye put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:" and chap. iii. 8. "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye *are hereunto called*, that ye should inherit a blessing." And what does the Apostle St. Paul say, with whose authority the bull arms itself in its curses against the erring? Rom. xiv. 1. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but not to doubtful disputation*." Verse 4. "Who art thou that judgest another? To his own master he either standeth or falleth." Verse 10. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? And why dost thou set at nought thy brother?" Verse 13. "*Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more*; but judge this rather, *that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way*." These are the words which might have been expected from an Apostle of the benevolent Saviour, who cursed none of his bitterest enemies, but prayed for them on the cross, and who, as we read in St. Luke ix. 51—56. severely reproved his disciples when they wished to call down fire from Heaven upon the Samaritan town that would not receive him. But I have read something here, (pointing to an Italian book on the Council of Trent, in Henry's library,) which makes me shudder. The holy bishops assembled at Trent ended that great Roman Catholic council by a general deprecation

which they echoed at the request of their president, the Cardinal of Lorraine. Towards the conclusion, the Cardinal exclaimed, "*Curse to all heretics!*" And all the venerable Bishops, the *successors* of Jesus and his Apostles, answered, with one voice, "*Curse, curse, curse!*"

Oh, there an angel ought to have thundered down the words of St. Paul: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation. Bless, and curse not."—But hear our text further.

Vers. 4. "For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

This the minister of this place lately explained to be the burdensome doctrines on which the later expounders of the law set an equal value with the law of Moses, and with which they harassed the people. It struck me that our clergy also had tied up heavy bundles for the laity, which had not been gathered from the field of Scripture; as, for instance, that all the laity should minutely acknowledge and confess their sins and failings; that we, though we have repented of our sins, must still do penance, repeat paternosters, and especially remember Churches, Monasteries, and Priests, with offerings; that we, during forty days, must eat no flesh, which is considered a mortal sin; that we must have masses read for the dead, must purchase indulgences from the Church, and must blindly submit to all the decisions of the Priesthood.

Henry. Stop, Antonio; here you exceed the truth: such a blind obedience the Priesthood does not require.

Antonio. What! will you not believe the Holy Council of Trent?

Henry. Has the Council decreed that?

Antonio. Has it not, in every one of its canons, denounced a curse upon all who teach differently from its own bishops?

Henry. That is certainly true.

Antonio. (Taking down the book on the Council of Trent.) Give me leave. Read here what the Council says in the thirteenth session. "The Holy Council, in establishing the doctrine of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, henceforth *prohibits* all faithful Christians from *believing*, teaching, and preaching, *otherwise* than has been here decreed." But hear our Saviour further.

Ver. 5. "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments."

The Jewish Rabbis, or teachers of the Law, and the Priests, wore, on the left arm and on the forehead, sentences of the Law written on tickets enclosed in capsulæ, and they made these capsulæ very large, in order to appear to the people extremely zealous for the Law. This our priests certainly do not do. And it would appear very strange if our Priests of the Inquisition, who know no mercy, should wear such a sentence as this on the forehead—"*Blessed are the merciful*;" or if the Pope, the Cardinals, and Bishops, on Holy Thursday, when the Bull of the seventeen curses is recited, wore as a phylactery, "*Bless and curse not.*" But our Priests abound in splendid mass-garments, in robes, mantles, violet dresses, crimson hats, and all possible external raiment, which may strike the eye; and the Pope has to wear a threefold crown upon his head, which may easily remind us of the pictures of the Tower of Babel. And how much in the Catholic form of worship is only calculated that the Priest may be seen of men! Take the mass as an instance. Does it not exalt the power of the Priest, who, by the sacred form of consecration, procures the body of Christ, encloses it in the host, and bears it about, far above the power of Christ, who subjects his body to the sentence of the Priest, and even above the power of God, who gives such effect to the sentence of the Priest? And the holy sacrament of con-

fession; does it not attest the power of the Priest, who is able to forgive or retain sins, to open or shut heaven, much more than the mercy of God, who is gracious or not, according to the sentence and judgment of the Priest?

Henry. Leave off, Antonio, you become a heretic!

Antonio. By no means; I merely translate the words of our Saviour into the language of our times! He says further,

Ver. 6, 7. "And they love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi."

This accords thus with our times: The Holy Father, as vicegerent of God and Christ, maintains that he possesses a higher rank than all emperors and kings; his legates claim precedence of the ambassadors of all other princes; in general councils they require the first seats. I remember very well how the good fathers of Naples, who educated me, used to relate to me, with a triumphant air, how the mighty emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, had held the stirrup for the Pope at Venice; and how another emperor, Henry the Fourth, had stood three nights in the open air, as a penitent, before Pope Gregory the Seventh, in the court-yard of the Castle of Canessa. I was, at that time, not a little rejoined at these accounts: but hear now what the Lord says to his disciples and apostles.

Ver. 8—10. "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called Masters; for one is your Master, even Christ."

I cannot help thinking, that Christ spoke here prophetically of the Pope, for the expressions suit him as exactly as if they were now first delivered. But, pray tell me, what does Rabbi properly mean?

Henry. Rabbi was an honourable title of the Jewish Teachers, and signifies literally, *most high*, or *most excellent*.

Antonio. This just refers to the Cardinals, who bear the title of *eminence*, which exactly signifies *most high*, or *most excellent*. But, as the Saviour says they should call no man *Father* upon earth, because that title belongs only to God, we are hereby forbidden to call the Pope Holy Father. If none of the Apostles could receive this title, how dares their successor assume it? I object also to the word *holy*. When the Saviour was addressed by an individual in these words, "*Good Master*," he rebuked him, (Matt. xix. 16, 17,) and said, "There is none good but one, and that is God." Good master, I suppose, means nothing more than, in these days, Holy Father. The Saviour prayed to God with the expression, "Holy Father." (John xvii. 11.) I, therefore, consider it wrong to address a man in these terms. I will never more call the Pope Holy Father. But he ought not to be called the Head of Christendom, nor the common Father of all Christians, since it is here said, "One is your Head (Master) even Christ." Hear further:

Ver. 13. "But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

I explain this in two ways. In the first place, our Priests shut up from the laity the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles, which point out the entrance into the kingdom of heaven, yea, are the door that leads to it. They pronounce it as destructive to the soul if the laity will read what the Saviour and the Apostles intended for all, and not for the Priests alone*. Neither do they themselves read these precepts, but they confine themselves to the perusal of the Breviary, Papal Bulls, the Canons, and the Fathers; and thus they themselves do not enter the kingdom of heaven, for they have converted it into a temporal

* Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix X.

kingdom, with great treasures, numerous subjects, and regal splendour; in comparison to which, the kingdom of heaven may appear *poor* to many. In the second place, they shut up the kingdom of God, because they do not excite men to a Christian life, but so magnify the merit of hearing mass, fasting, blind faith in the Priests, of repeating pater-nosters, and other works of sanctity, that we may thereby forget Christian virtues. For what are our most heinous sins, when we confess to the Priest? Wrath, envy, deceit, lying, fraud, unchastity, theft. All this the Priest certainly does not exculpate; but we escape with a slight penance. But tell him that you have eaten flesh on a fast-day; that you have read the writings of a heretic; that you have mocked a Priest; that you doubt in the power of the holy water, or an image of the Virgin; then you will not come off without a severe penance; and beware, lest, by such offence, you fall into the hands of the holy officium.

Ver. 14. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore, ye shall receive the greater damnation."

This verse reminds me of the immense treasures which our Priests possess in most countries, and which they have received from pious men, in order to pray for them, to deliver them from purgatory, to grant them absolution, and to secure heaven to them. A Spaniard, attached to the embassy at Rome, once observed, that the clergy in Spain have double the income of the king. How it is in Italy you know yourself. I have also frequently heard of cases where rich widows have disinherited their poor relations, and have left their whole property to an Order, a Monastery, or a Church, and consequently to the Priesthood.

Ver. 15. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

Henry. You will surely not object, Antonio, to our endeavouring to convert those to the true faith who do not possess it?

Antonio. Not in the least: and that Jesus does certainly not mean. I have always held Missionary Societies, for the conversion of heathens, in great veneration. What Jesus condemns, is partly, that the Jewish teachers of the law sought not to make their converts Jews, but *Pharisees*, as the latter appeared to them more important than the former; partly, that they compassed sea and land, not to make these converts good men, but only Pharisees. Thus far the verse answers to our Priests. Their zeal is not directed to make Christians, but Roman Catholics. When a Protestant arrives in Rome, a net is instantly spread for him on all sides, as if he were still a heathen. To convert Protestants to Roman Catholicism, is considered so great a triumph, that the worst subjects are not rejected, who, as Catholics, are not a whit better than they were before, but, on the contrary, frequently grow worse and more daring, since they now hope (which they before did not believe) to be exonerated from all their crimes by absolutions, indulgences, and penances. This may well be called "compassing land and sea," since all means, good or bad, are adopted, to make proselytes to Catholicism. You have resided in Rome, and are aware, that sometimes money, sometimes promises, sometimes a marriage, a patronage, an office, or some other bribe, is used, as means of conversion, of turning a Christian into a Roman Catholic; that is, to induce him to hear masses, to fast, to say his beads, to adore the saints and the Virgin, and to consider heretics as damned. For the change of the proselyte goes frequently no deeper than these external signs of Roman Catholicism.

V. 16. "Woe unto you, blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor." Ver. 18. "And whosoever shall swear

by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty."

This has reminded me of the Jesuits, who form so great and so highly esteemed a part of our priesthood, and who, like the Pharisees, teach, that a false oath is of no consequence, if a man, while he is taking it, only think of something else, or add, in his own mind, some clause to the form of words. For instance, if a man be called upon to swear that he has not done such a thing, (although he *has* done it,) he need only add to himself, "Not from my youth, not at another time." These verses also reminded me of the Popes, who have often absolved subjects from their oath of allegiance towards their sovereigns, and these again from the oaths which they had taken to their subjects; and who maintain that they have the right to release a man from an oath which he has taken before God. Pope Clement VI. granted to the confessor of the king of France, the power to release, on the observance of certain penances, the king, the queen, and their posterity, from all oaths, (with the exception of religious oaths and vows,) the fulfilment of which they should find inconvenient. This the good monks of Naples related to me as an instance of the great power of the Pope, and I, at that time, admired it. But I now think, that when we have sworn before God, it is the greatest arrogance in a man to absolve us from such an oath, and that such a man audaciously exalts himself above God. The good monks also, to instil me with reverence for the saints, told me, that Lewis XI, king of France, thought himself bound by no oath excepting by one, taken on the relics of St. Lupus; and they maintained, that an oath acquires a far more sacred and binding character, if taken on the relic of a saint or martyr.

Ver. 23. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye

to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Thus, a note in my New Testament explains very justly thus:—of trifles ye make much, but of the most important things ye make nothing. This text is explained by what I have said already. In the opinion of our priests, it is a greater crime not to hear mass, than not to listen to the voice of justice and benevolence; they require obedience to the priests, even in preference to faith towards God and fidelity towards man; they think it more heinous to eat flesh on fast-days than to commit fornication.

Ver. 25. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess!"

This I refer to the great value which our priests set on fasts, and other mere external penances, which do not improve the inner man, but leave him a slave to all his appetites. But the evil is still heightened, as the Roman Catholic reckons fasts in the number of those rites, whereby he can expiate and cancel the punishments of sin, and consequently the punishment due to impurity of heart.

Henry. But Jesus himself fasted, and his disciples also. Should not, therefore, a Christian do the same? Have you not read, that the Saviour once fasted forty days and forty nights; and do you not know that this is the origin of our Quadragesimal fast?

Antonio. I am perfectly aware of that. But this is quite different. Jesus and his Apostles fasted *voluntarily*; it should, therefore, be left to the free option of every Christian. Jesus fasted on an extraordinary occasion, when he had to prepare himself, by a severe trial, for the cruel treatment which he was to experience from men. Jesus and his Apostles did not fast because it was something meritorious, absolving from sin, and averting punishment. Finally, they so

fasted, that they endured *hunger*; but we, during our fasts, are well *pampered* and *satiated*. Our fasts are a prohibition from eating flesh, as if this were an impediment to devotion; but flesh, on the contrary, is a light food, and easy of digestion. But we eat all sorts of indigestible *meal porridges*, which lead and injure the stomach, and cloud the understanding. Is not this folly? And who can persuade himself, that the flesh of fish, which the Catholic fasts permit, is no flesh? I should be glad to know, how our Church conceived the strange idea, that the flesh of fish is no flesh.

Henry. The Church believes herself justified in excepting fish, from the prohibition of eating flesh, because, according to St. Matth. xiv. 19.; Jesus had bread and fish with him in the wilderness, where he probably fasted, and because, after his resurrection, (St. John xxi. 10—13.) he also ate bread and fish. St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 39.) is likewise cited in proof of this. "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds."

Antonio. Let us consider these passages more attentively. How is it to be proved from St. Matt. xiv. 16. that Jesus had lately fasted. I find no trace of it in this passage, and the supposition is entirely groundless. That he had fish with him, was not the effect of choice, but because he was with the Apostles on the lake Genesareth, as verses 13. and 22. clearly shew. This appears also from St. John, xxi. 10—13., where the Saviour ate fish with his Apostles, because the latter had just caught some in the lake. But as for 1 Cor. xv. 39., it is quite absurd to cite that passage in proof of this assertion. The Apostle wishes to make it understood, that our future bodies at the resurrection, will not be formed as our present bodies are, and he explains this by examples; viz. that in the form of terrestrial bodies, there is a great variety. He does not, therefore, allude to the difference in the

flesh of quadrupeds, fishes, and birds, but to the difference in the form and the parts of their bodies. This you must allow, that the Apostle assigns a body, and, consequently, flesh to fishes, and that it is, therefore, quite absurd to conclude from thence, that the body of a fish is no flesh.

Henry. But, Antonio, do you not consider it an exercise well pleasing to God, and conducive to self-denial, sometimes to refrain from the use of agreeable food? The true Christian, who is to accustom himself to mortify his desires, must first have sufficient resolution to refrain from his usual food.

Antonio. That may be when it is a *voluntary*, not an enjoined act: and there might be some merit in it, if the use of flesh were not supplied by abundance of other delicate food; but that we should please God through the choice of *certain* food; that we should defile ourselves by eating on a fast-day wholesome flesh, of which we partake on other days; this, dear Henry, I no longer believe, because our Saviour and his Apostles have taught me better. For Jesus saith, Matt. xv. 11. and 17. "Do not ye yet understand, that whatever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies. *These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.*" And, therefore, to eat flesh defileth not either. St. Paul, Rom. xiv. 17. writes, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men." These are explicit words of the Apostle, according to which no value ought ever to have been set on fasts and penances. The same Apostle warns (1 Tim. iv. 3.) "against false teachers, who should forbid to marry,

and command to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving;" and declares, ver. 8, that "bodily exercise profiteth us but little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I will fast no more, my dear Henry, but will endeavour to encrease in godliness!

Ver. 29. "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous; and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets."

When I consider how many churches, chapels, and monasteries are dedicated to the Saviour, the Holy Virgin, the Apostles, the Saints, and Martyrs, and what high honours we pay to them, it has often struck me what impression it would make if, in a true Roman Catholic country, our Saviour, or St. Peter and St. Paul, were now to appear, and to teach and deliver the same doctrines, which we read in the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles? Whether they would be considered good Christians, or heretics, if they gave the cup at the communion, observed no fasts, called no man *Father*, or *Holy Father*; if they made the obtainment of everlasting life to depend on obedience to the commandments, and were entirely silent concerning the Pope, the worship of saints, the mass, holy water, a monastic life, the confessional, indulgences, oral confession, and so many other things which the Roman Catholic now observes. I believe that Jesus and his Apostles could not venture to go to Spain and Italy, they would only be acknowledged as good Christians here among the Protestants, but there they would soon fall into the hands of the Inquisition, and would be treated by the Pope much in the same manner as our Saviour was by the Jewish high priest, Caiaphas.

Henry. Antonio, you are really no longer a Roman

Catholic; you are become a Protestant. Take care not to divulge your sentiments.

Antonio. Whether I am still a Roman Catholic, or am become a Protestant, I really do not know myself. But this I do know, that I am a Christian, and an orthodox Christian, for I am a follower of Christ in the Gospels, and of the Apostles in the Epistles. I certainly do not appear to myself any longer a Roman Catholic, at least not a *good* one; but I will not make myself uneasy on this subject, if I can only believe that I am a *good Christian.* But I will not conceal my sentiments; for we must publish the truth, that others may also acknowledge it, and may not be confirmed in their errors.

Henry. Well, here in Germany, it may do; but, in Italy, you would soon be compelled to silence.

Antonio. Bad enough, that they there know no better means than violence for defending the faith. It does not become the successor of St. Peter to use violence; for when St. Peter (St. Matt. xxvi. 51.) drew the sword in defence of Jesus, his Master reproved him in these words: ver. 52, 53. "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" I should think the Pope also ought to wait till God come to the assistance of the true faith, by a just, and not violent means. An Inquisition, Jesus would neither have founded, approved of, recommended, nor adopted.

Henry. I see, Antonio, that you are so well versed in Scripture, that you have always an answer at hand. But you are wrong in confining yourself to the Bible alone; for we have traditions, which we have derived from the Apostles, through the hands of the Bishops and the holy Fathers, and these we are bound to honour; they define many points, concerning which the New Testament is silent, and they frequently differ from it.

Antonio. I pretend not to judge of the traditions, but this I know, that they ought not to contradict what the Evangelists and the Apostles have written, otherwise these have contradicted themselves; and I also know that a belief in the traditions is not essentially necessary to salvation; for in not one of the numerous passages which treat of eternal life, will you find a single word concerning the traditions. The case upon the whole appears to me very strange! Supposing your father had made a written will in the presence of the magistrate, and lawful witnesses, and one of his friends should, after his death, come and say, that your father had also made a verbal will, which he had confided to him, and had made him your guardian, delegated to him a share of his paternal rights, and had left him a considerable legacy; what would you think? If the verbal will contradicted in many places the written one, annulled several clauses in it, added others, and, finally, proved very much to the interest of the person to whom your father was said to have entrusted it, would you repose as much faith in it as in the written will? Or, could any one blame you for adhering to the written will alone?

Henry. Your comparison is still but a lame one, Antonio!

Antonio. It may be lame, but it answers the purpose; and I wish it could make an impression upon you.

Henry. I really believe, that you wish I should cease to be a Roman Catholic.

Antonio. I wish that you were, what I am, a disciple of Christ and his Apostles, and that you ceased to be a disciple of the Pope and the priesthood.

Henry. Are you, then, no longer their disciple?

Antonio. No!—Not unconditionally; only as far as I find the doctrines of our priests corresponding with the New Testament.

Henry. Then you are a Protestant!

Antonio. It may be; the Gospel existed before the

Popes and the Cardinals. (*With solemnity.*) Henry! I am a poor orphan; I stand alone in the world, and have nothing but the sky above me, and the earth beneath me. You are my only friend upon earth, but I will not conceal from you what has passed in my mind, from fear of offending you. (*Earnestly.*) Really, I am become a better man, though I may be still a sinner, and you have a more faithful friend in me. Listen to what happened to me, when I was leaving Rome with you. I can no longer conceal it. I was confessing once more to Father M——, in Rome, who belongs to the Jesuits, and was begging his blessing upon my journey. "Go, my son," said he, "in the name of God, but forget not what you owe to the Holy Mother, the Church. You go with a stray sheep, who has but just been led to the true faith. Much of the heretical poison of his youth still cleaves to him, and it is to be feared that he will be again drawn over by his family and his friends to the accursed Lutheran heresy. The Mother of God commits to thee, as to a good Catholic, the duty of watching over his faith. Observe him narrowly, watch the conversations between him and his family and friends; if they become too confidential, endeavour dexterously to sow seeds of disunion and distrust between them. You may have even recourse to falsehood; for it is no sin, when it tends to the honour of God; and the Church absolves you from it. Above all, my son, omit not to write every particular respecting the young man to the Reverend Father N——, who will then furnish you with further instructions. But you must keep this correspondence secret; and, on the whole, not let the young man perceive that you watch him. Be zealous and prudent, my son, and you will be well rewarded. The reverend Father will faithfully provide for you."

At the time, dear Henry, when I received this commission, I was much rejoiced at it; I believed I should do a good work, and deserve the rewards of heaven, if

I performed it faithfully. But since I, in Frankfort, received the New Testament, and have read it, I have changed my opinion. You may rest assured, I will neither watch you, nor set you at variance with your parents, nor write to Father N——.

Henry retired, for he did not wish Antonio to witness the emotion which he was unable to control. He felt ashamed and mortified to find that his protegée had been commissioned to watch his conduct. Father N—— was a bosom friend of Rossi, who had converted Henry, and he saw clearly that both priests had acted in concert. He had so uprightly and conscientiously embraced Roman Catholicism, that it gave him the deepest pain to find his sincerity still suspected. These apprehensions appeared to him incompatible with a good cause, which trusts to its intrinsic merits. And the commission, to correspond privately, and set him at variance with his parents!—With what traps was he surrounded, if Antonio had not proved honest! He felt, with pain, that not his happiness, but the honour of the Church, had been consulted; and the observation of a friend appeared to him now verified, that the Roman Catholics make proselytes, not for the sake of their salvation, but to fill the Church.

CHAPTER XI.

When Henry's father had returned, the evening conversations were resumed, and the foundation of our knowledge of the Christian Religion was canvassed. Henry maintained that, besides the Holy Scriptures, there were other sources of Christian knowledge, namely, the *Traditions*, or verbal instructions given by the Apostles, and propagated by the Christian Bishops, which relate to matters of faith, of practice, holy rites, and Church constitution. This, he said, was an important article in the faith of Catholics; wherefore, the Council of Trent (in the first decree of the fourth session) had established:—"The Holy Council receives all the books of the Old and New Testament, and the *Traditions*, both those which refer to faith, and those which regard morality, with equally pious veneration, (pari pietatis affectu et reverentia.) But whosoever knowingly and deliberately rejects them, let him be cursed."

Henry's father declared, that he knew but little of the so called Traditions, and begged Bernhard to speak on this subject with Henry, to which he willingly consented.

Henry. You will allow, my dear Bernhard, that the Apostles, when they taught in the congregation, must have said much more than we find in their Epistles.

Bernhard. More?—certainly; but whether they said any thing else than their Epistles contain, is another question, which you cannot answer in the affirmative by any proofs.

Henry. I am, in the mean time, satisfied with the *more*, which you admit. You will further allow, that all the Epistles of the Apostles were mere occasional instructions, in which they do not treat of the whole system of faith and morals, but merely partially, as the situation of the different congregations required.

Bernhard. To this I cannot perfectly agree. It, at least, does not refer to the Gospels, the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, and the first Epistle of St. John, which have the general object in view, of instructing their readers concerning Jesus and the spirit of his doctrine.

Henry. But you will also admit, that St. Paul even refers to the verbal instructions which he has given to the congregations, 2 Thess. ii. 15; 1 Cor. ii. 2. 23. 34; 1 Tim. vi. 20.

Bernhard. I allow this. I assure you, that we Protestants would eagerly seek and reverence the contents of these verbal instructions, if we possessed them, because they would give us many elucidations on the sense of the Apostolical writings. We only lament that these instructions are lost, and that there exist no authentic accounts of them.

Henry. What! you do not know that these precisely are the Traditions of the Catholic Church; that they have been propagated by the Bishops, and have gradually been laid down in the writings of the Fathers, and in the decrees of the Church councils.

Bernhard. So your Church maintains, but it is not so. I have read the Fathers, and know on what the Traditions are founded*.

Henry. You will admit of the general argument in favour of the Traditions, namely, ***what has at all times and in all places, from the beginning of Christianity, been believed by the Christians, that must necessarily be considered as taught by the Apostles***

* Testimonies of the Fathers, see Appendix XI.

themselves. For it would be impossible that an erroneous doctrine could be generally received.

Bernhard. I can agree to this argument, and you will still not gain any thing. What has been taught from the beginning among all Christians, is contained in the Apostles' Creed, which our Church also acknowledges, and which forms the text of the three articles in the second part of our Lutheran Catechism. It is this which the fathers, till the third century, call the Tradition of Faith. This is the generally received faith of all Churches to which they refer, and which they oppose to the new doctrine of heretics; and nothing else. They know nothing of your mass, of the worship of saints, the Pope and his power, purgatory, confession, and absolution, the withholding of the cup at the Lord's Supper, transubstantiation, the seven sacraments, indulgences, pilgrimages, rosaries, and consecrated water; and I boldly challenge you to the proof, whether any father of the Church, during the four first centuries, has referred to the Traditions in any one of these points. You will, on the contrary, find, that what they call tradition, is the doctrine contained in the Apostles' Creed, or any similar short summary of the generally-received doctrine.

Henry. I can scarcely believe this.

Bernhard. Well, you shall hear. The great father Tertullian, who lived towards the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, contends, in his work entitled De Præscriptione, against the false teachers of his time, who pretended that their doctrine —they were the so called Gnostics, who boasted of higher wisdom—had been taught as a secret doctrine by the Apostles. Tertullian opposes to them, that those Churches which were infallibly founded by the Apostles, knew nothing of these things, but taught differently, and that the general doctrine of the Apostolical Churches ought to be regarded as the *Rule of Faith,* (regula fidei). He, therefore, calls the traditions the Rule of Faith, but he also specifies what they

contain. This he does in the thirteenth chapter of that part of his writings where it is said, "But the *Rule of Truth* is this belief: There is but one God, and beside him no Creator, who, by his Word, which he issued before all existence, has formed all things from nothing; who, as the Word, also called Son of God, has at different times been seen by the patriarchs and heard by the prophets, but has at length descended in the Virgin Mary, has become flesh, and has been born as the man Jesus Christ, who subsequently announced a new law, and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven,—was crucified, rose again on the third day, and was received into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; who in his stead sent the power of the Holy Ghost, to guide the faithful; who will come again, and, after the resurrection and restoration of the body, will lead the saints into everlasting life, and the enjoyment of the rewards of heaven, but will condemn the wicked to everlasting fire. This rule (of faith) proceeds from Christ, &c."

Beside Tertullian, hear Irenæus, the celebrated Bishop of Lyons, (who died about the year 202), who, in his refutation of the heretics, also refers to the tradition of the general Church, and who, in the tenth chapter of the first book, lays down the confession, which he also (chapter twenty-two) calls the Rule of Truth, in the following terms: "The Church dispersed over the whole earth has been thus taught by the Apostles and their disciples: That there is but one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; also but one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for our salvation; also the Holy Ghost, who, by the prophets, has announced the two-fold covenant, the annunciation of Christ, his birth of a Virgin, his sufferings, his resurrection, his ascension, and his second advent from heaven, that he may accomplish all things, raise up all men, sit in judgment, send the wicked into everlasting fire, but give life and immortality to the righ-

teous and the saints, who have kept his commandments." This belief, Irenæus adds, "the Churches of all countries professed, as unanimously as if they resided together in one house. Let the learned alter nothing in this creed, but only endeavour further to elucidate it."

From the latter part you see, that, at that time, there existed no traditions concerning the more accurate definition of these doctrines, and that among the fathers, the generally-adopted faith was nothing more than has been here specified, consequently, the purport of the Apostolical Creed. And this, as none will deny, agrees with the New Testament. All additions, therefore, that have subsequently been produced under the name of Traditions, do not take their origin in the *early* times of the Church, but are *newly-advanced doctrines*, which decidedly cannot be considered as Apostolical. But in the explanation of these doctrines, which, as Irenæus says, lay at the option of the learned, there was so little unanimity among the fathers, that the Jesuit, Daniel Petau, confesses, in his learned work on the doctrine of faith, that it is uncertain what the fathers of the four first centuries have taught concerning the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Serviter Monk, Paul Sarpi, relates, in his celebrated history of your chief council, the Council of Trent, that the Bishops assembled there were often very doubtful what degree of authority should be ascribed to the tradition, and only the great number of Italian Bishops, and well-applied threats, enabled the council to assign to the traditions authority equal to that of the Scriptures.

Henry. I must certainly yield to you in all these points; but I justify the judicial authority of the traditions, even if established at a later period, on the infallibility of the Church. The Church has the Spirit of God, consequently it cannot err; and St. Paul himself calls it, (1 Tim. iii. 15.) "the pillar and ground of the truth."

Bernhard. With regard to this passage, St. Paul may call the Church the pillar of truth, (that is, of Christian doctrine,) and yet its infallibility will not thence follow. For by means of the Christian Church, Christianity is preserved and propagated. Without the Christian Church, the existence of Christianity cannot be conceived. But the words, *pillar and ground of truth*, do not at all belong to the word Church, but to the following verse. That, even the Catholic translator of the New Testament, Van Ess, has acknowledged, and has very justly united them with the following verse. He says, more accurately than our Lutheran translation, "The pillar and ground of the truth; and, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness," &c. But if you say, the Church has the Spirit of God, and is, therefore, infallible, what do you understand by the Church?

Henry. The assembly of Bishops at the council.

Bernhard. But have the Priests alone the Spirit of God, and not laymen also?

Henry. The Priests alone, with regard to decision in points of faith; for in this laymen have no voice. But for sanctification, laymen likewise have the Spirit of God.

Bernhard. But does not St. John write to all Christians, (Epistle ii. 20.) "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Does not St. Paul say to all the Christians at Ephesus: "I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of *wisdom* and *revelation* in the knowledge of him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of your calling," &c. And on what grounds will you divide the gifts of the Spirit, which give both wisdom and sanctification, and allow to the priest wisdom, but to the layman only sanctification? Who are you, to mark out to the Spirit of God such prescriptions, such measures? And

can sanctification take place without knowledge? Have not your Councils also determined what is requisite for sanctification, when they gave their decisions concerning repentance, penances, forgiveness of sins, the duty of implicit faith in their decrees, and other points? And now, my dear Henry, what becomes of the infallibility of the priesthood, when you inquire into the contradictions into which they have fallen? To give only a few examples among many:—the doctrine of Arius was condemned at the Council of Nice, 325, was approved of at the Council of Antioch, in the year 341, and was, finally, by the influence of the Emperor Theodosius, condemned once more at the Council of Constantinople, 381. The doctrine of Eutyches triumphed at the Council of Ephesus (449), and was afterwards condemned at the Council of Chalcedon (451). The great Councils of Constance (1414) and Basil (1431) solemnly declared that a General Council was superior to the Pope; and the Popes at Rome, in their bulls, with equal solemnity, pronounced this declaration an arrant heresy. Where, then, is the infallibility of the priesthood? And is not the whole priesthood of the Eastern Church at variance with the priesthood of the West, concerning several points of faith? You may, therefore, as well relinquish this infallibility.

Henry. But if you consider the Church as fallible, it follows, that it may adopt errors, which may, by degrees, become so numerous as to obscure truth, and finally to efface it. By this, the aim of Christianity would be entirely destroyed, which God cannot permit, and, therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that, through his Spirit, he renders the Church infallible.

Bernhard. The Church consists of men, and all men are subject to error, from which the priests are not exempt. But a united body, like the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, is the more likely to err, since it has private interests; and it is quite natural, and almost inevitable, that these interests will

influence its decisions. These private interests are much enhanced, by the head of the Roman Catholic priests possessing a temporal kingdom in Italy, and by the large territories which are in the hands of the priesthood in all Catholic countries, except in France; (in Spain, they may be said to possess a kingdom within a kingdom). To require this priesthood to abolish and revoke rites, customs, and opinions, which are extremely advantageous to them, would, in fact, be asking something super-human; on the contrary, it is quite natural that they endeavour to preserve all that can secure or support their power and their riches, and that the Councils will, therefore, confirm these points, or, at least, never reject them. Thus we cannot blame the Popes, that, as kings of the state of the Church, they would never acknowledge the General Councils as their superiors, and as authorized to depose them. But easily as an united body may err, so unlikely is it, on the other hand, for all Christianity to err, or long to persevere in error, if the investigation of truth be only not prevented by prohibitions, or prematurely stopped by dictated articles of faith. Easily as individuals may err, the Almighty has yet endowed mankind in general with so much understanding, that they, sooner or later, emerge from error, and at length fix upon truth. Errors in religion are, therefore, never of permanent duration; and great as the number of the erring, by you called heretics, has been, from the first century to the present time, yet Christianity has always existed, and will continue to exist. The infallibility, which you arrogate to the priesthood, increases the evil on all sides. That the priesthood is not infallible, we have seen, and history proves it every where. The chief heretics arose in the midst of this infallible priesthood. The great presbyter, Tertullian, became a Montanist; the arch-heretic, Arius, was presbyter in Alexandria; Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicea; Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch; Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople; Mele-

tius, Bishop of Antioch; all these became heretics and founders of heresies. In the middle of the fourth century, the Bishops of half Christendom were Arian, and were deposed in numbers by the Emperor Theodosius. The great and lasting heresies, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, and the two natures of Christ, were principally discussed among the priests, not among laymen, and the whole priesthood was, upon these points, split into parties, and mutually condemned each other in the Councils. And who has established the doctrine of this infallibility? Not the laity, but the priests themselves. But can any one be a witness in his own cause?—You see, therefore, that the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, whose truth and authenticity are and can only be founded on the infallibility of the priesthood, rest on no foundation, and that the Protestant Church is perfectly in the right, if it confines itself to the written Word of God in the Holy Scriptures, and puts no trust in that, which an erring priesthood of later ages will pronounce to be the Word of God.

Henry. You have completely vanquished me in this point, my dear Bernhard, and I really know not what more to oppose to your arguments. It is true, that half the priesthood of the Christian world were at one time Arian, and that only the political interposition of the Emperor Theodosius overthrew the Arian Bishops. I can absolutely not reconcile this with the infallibility of the priests and the traditions.

Father. I can add another argument, Henry, which, as a layman, has always appeared sufficient to me to reject the traditions which the priesthood pretend to have propagated. At the time of Jesus, there existed also among the Jews, oral traditions, to which the Pharisees and Scribes adhered, and by which, as in the Roman Catholic Church, many rites, opinions, and ordinances were observed, which the Mosaic law did not contain. But Jesus rejected these traditions in

the most decisive manner. Only read Matthew xv. 1—9.

Henry. But the Mosaic law contained all that the Jews were to believe or to observe. But it cannot be proved that the writings of the New Testament were intended by their authors to contain all that the Christian is to believe and to observe. The traditions are, therefore, necessary to supply what is wanting.

Father. There is nothing wanting. You have heard that, till the fourth century, the contents of our Apostles' creed alone were considered necessary to Christian faith, and were regarded as the traditions. All its articles you find abundantly and explicitly in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. You can also not deny that the Gospels were written for the instruction of those who wished to become Christians, and therefore, undoubtedly, contain all that is necessary to salvation.

Mother. In proof of this, we have the decisive testimony in John xx. 30, 31. where it is said:—"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, *and that believing ye might have life in his name.*" Our Saviour says also, (St. John xvii. 3.) "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And, on these points, the Scripture gives us perfect information.

Henry. You constantly beat me off the field with the Scriptures, my dear mother, and I see that you are as well versed in the Bible as ever. But I could easily prove to you, that the Bible is a very insecure foundation for Christian faith. In the mean time, I think that we may reserve this subject till to-morrow.

CHAPTER XII.

Henry. It gave me not a little uneasiness when Rossi laid the following charge against the Protestants;—"The Protestant Church wishes to confine itself exclusively to the Bible, and rejects the authority of the infallible Church. But the Bible is written in a foreign language, and must be explained. And who is to explain it? Your divines since the Reformation have differed upon a great many passages, and are not yet agreed concerning them. They cannot be unanimous, because they want an *infallible* expounder, which we possess in the Church and in the traditions. With you every divine offers his own private opinion, and you have as many theological systems as you have celebrated divines. From this nothing can proceed but confusion; what one adopts the other rejects. Some receive no more of Christianity than can be proved by reason; some attempt to explain away the existence of Satan from the Scriptures, some the miracles and prophecies, others again, this or that doctrine. Your confessions of faith do not bind your teachers, for you will have liberty of conscience and of conviction. The consequence is, that the most contradictory opinions and ideas are broached, that the people no longer know what they are to believe, that they become confused, and in the end believe absolutely nothing. Your liberty of teaching, your want of an infallibly decisive authority in matters of faith, is therefore a great evil, which must eventually lead to the entire dissolution of your Church. This evil can be avoided only by dispensing with all freedom of

doctrine, by submitting to an infallible arbiter of faith unconditionally, without inquiring into reasons, and by never examining his decisions: this arbiter of faith we have in the pope and the priesthood, to whose decrees, even without proving them, all are bound to submit. Thence we derive that invaluable blessing, a perfect unity of faith; what one believes all believe; one and the same confession of faith is on every lip, and what has been once established as an article of faith by a council of priests is never more a subject of doubt."

I could not give my friend a satisfactory answer on this point: what do you say to it?

Father. I might in the first place answer you merely negatively, viz. that the infallible arbiters of faith so extolled by you, have never performed what you boast of them; and with regard to the interpretation of Scripture, there never was in the Church unanimity on the subject.

Bernhard. Only read the explanations of Scripture by Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Augustin, and those of a later date by the Scholastics, and you will find that they are far, far more contradictory than the interpretations of the present divines can possibly be. The reason of this is, that the principles of legitimate interpretation were then unknown; but since these have become more recognised and more accurately defined in the Protestant Church, unanimity concerning the sense of Scripture has gradually increased; and this unanimity would have been still greater if there had not always existed persons who wished to interpret the Holy Scripture according to their own preconceived opinions. But such conceits as the fathers, whose explanations the Roman Catholics consider as binding, have advanced in abundance, have never been broached by any of our divines: for instance, as when Clement of Alexandria (Pœdagog. III. 10.) quotes the words of Jesus (Matt. xviii. 20.) "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them,"

as a proof that marriage is well pleasing to God, and explains the *three* as referring to the husband, wife, and child; or as when Irenæus against heretics (IV. 12.) considers the three spies whom Rahab received in Jericho as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. If you assert that we have as many theological systems as we have celebrated divines, you must remember that the case was the same in the primitive and in the Roman Church. Tertullian had a different system from Clement and Origen; Augustin again a different one; Gregory Nazianzen still another: among the Scholastics, Anselm, Thomas, John Erigena, Duns Scotus, Occam, Biel, and others, till the Reformation, had their peculiar systems. The Popes and the priesthood could as little prevent this as they had been able to prevent an innumerable catalogue of so called heresies, the greatest number of which, moreover, originated in the priesthood itself. What has your infallible priesthood availed you? It has not prevented differences of opinion, that was out of its power; but the stronger party persecuted and condemned the weaker, and he who yielded to compulsion was in error and a heretic; but he who conquered was orthodox, and of course in the right. This is in a few words the history of the infallibility of your Church, which your assertion concerning the advantages of an infallible arbiter of faith exposes in all its defects.

Wilhelmina. I should think that two are required in this case; the *one* who maintains that he is infallible, and the *other* who believes, and blindly submits to him. What benefit does the one derive from his infallibility if the other does not believe in it, but takes the liberty of judging for himself? The unity of faith maintained by your infallible Pope and his bishops therefore avails them but little, if the priesthood have not the means of convincing the laity of their own infallibility. What measures then have the Popes adopted for this purpose?

Henry remains silent and embarrassed.

Father. History tells us that interdicts, sentences of condemnation, the inquisition, and persecutions of all kinds were the means which the popes and ecclesiastics, as well as the princes who supported them, fulminated against the refractory.

Wilhelmina. Then they did not maintain their infallibility by better means than our neighbour, the smith, who proves the justice of his opinions to his wife with his iron rod.

Father. The refractory were silenced, and the priests were satisfied: but they certainly were not brought to believe, for it is clear that conviction admits not of coercion. This the Catholic priesthood have also experienced among themselves, for even to this hour they are not agreed whether the pope is always infallible or only in certain cases; whether he can be judged by a general council or not; whether his decisions are valid in themselves, or only after they have been approved by the Church: whether he is the sole bishop of the Church, and all other bishops are only his vicars, or whether he is only the first among the bishops, and only one of their equals. The popes have certainly decided all these points in their own favour, and have declared contrary opinions as heretical; but the other bishops have so far refused to believe them. These have rather advocated the contrary opinions, which the popes have again not approved. The infallible priesthood, therefore, could never produce or preserve unity of faith even among themselves, much less among the laity.

Henry. I see clearly that the Roman Catholic priesthood have not been able to maintain perfect unity of faith; but it is still natural that disputes on points of faith should be decided by the priesthood.

Father. Certainly, by *arguments*, but not by sentences, which are subject to no investigation; for no man can be bound to a blind faith. It is immoral to consider that as a duty, of the propriety of which we

are not convinced. Jesus and his Apostles did not require a blind faith.

Henry. But the Apostles did not, however, allow the laity to examine and judge what they preached to them, consequently the priests, the successors of the Apostles, have the right to demand an unconditional obedience of faith from the laity.

Father. The great Apostle St. Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth (1 Cor. x. 15.) "I speak as to wise men; *judge ye* what I say," Again, 2 Cor. i. 24. "Not for that we have *dominion over your faith*, but are helpers of your joy." And that the priesthood are not infallible through the Holy Spirit, as they maintain, and have dominion over the faith of the laity, is clearly proved by the directions which the Apostle gives to the Christians at Thessalonica, (1 Thess. v. 20, 21.) "Despise not prophesyings! *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.*"

But what is the language of the Roman Catholic bishops at Trent? "We *command* that no man *dare believe* or teach otherwise than we have here appointed!" How modest is the great Apostle, and how arrogant the little bishops at Trent! In vain, therefore, has the Apostle St. Peter (1 Pet. v. 2, 3.) warned Christian bishops against the presumption of making themselves lords and rulers of the Church, when he says to them, "Feed the flock of God, which is among you, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

Henry. But experience has however confirmed, that where freedom of opinion on matters of faith has been permitted, the most contradictory sentiments have been broached, which have only confused the people.

Father. Different opinions on religious points have at all times taken place, as well in the Roman Church, where belief is compulsory, as in our Church, where it is voluntary. But when they are not followed by persecutions they have, as experience teaches, no influence on the essentials of religion or on religious

practice. The different learned systems of our own divines, as long as they did not make the pulpit the vehicle of their heretical opinions, have had no material effect on the performance of their pastoral duties. It may be safely asserted of them all that they endeavoured to render their respective congregations more perfect in the Christian virtues. I have heard many Protestant preachers on my travels, but did not meet with one who delivered opinions repulsive to my feelings; I derived edification from them all. If you read the great mass of printed Protestant sermons you will soon be convinced that their authors, though they may start from different points, all aim at the same goal, viz. to awaken their hearers to a Christian life. There are certainly some who convert the pulpit into a stage for learned disputes, but these are few, and they are soon reduced to silence, as they are deserted by the people, who want edification and not disputes.

Mother. And even if it were not so, every Christian has the Bible, and really what God wills and what man must do to be saved are so simply and clearly written in it, that the laity even can have no doubts upon these points. Remember also what I have already told you on this subject. I should also think that a Christian life may be compatible with a difference of opinion on this or that point of faith; reverence for the doctrines and precepts of Jesus will always produce obedience. I only consider those opinions pernicious which induce us to neglect virtue, give security to sin, and nourish a false delusive comfort; such are certainly erroneous and superstitious.

Bernhard. There your mother is in the right, Henry; the chief criterion of the truth or erroneousness of a doctrine depends upon its influence on the life of man. This Jesus himself says when he warns against false teachers as wolves in sheep's clothing, and gives this direction:—"*by their fruits ye shall know them.*" And why will we not follow the example of the primitive Church when, as Irenæus assures us, men ad-

hered to the simple articles of the Apostles' creed, and allowed free scope to the divines on all other disputed points of faith? Christianity continued to exist under these circumstances, it grew and flourished: and it will not now perish, although different views of faith may exist.

Henry. Were I to concede this, it is still evident that freedom of opinion in the Protestant Churches has attacked even the articles of the Apostles' creed. Many imagine that the name Protestant, in which they so much delight, confers the right of protesting against every thing which is not the creation of their own fancy, and they aim at distinction by gradually detaching themselves from all faith in the peculiar characteristics of Christianity, and by adhering only to the dictates of natural religion.

Bernhard. I do not deny that the name Protestant has been abused. This name is not strictly suitable to us: the Protestant states of the German empire received, as is generally known, the name of Protestants three hundred years ago, because they protested against the decree of the empire at Spires, and, therefore, against the decision of the emperor in matters of religion. The name Protestant belongs to the history of the empire, and never ought to have supplanted that of *Evangelical* *. The *Protestant* states of the late empire were those who claimed the right of regulating ecclesiastical affairs in their own territories according to the word of Scripture, and protested against the authority of the pope or the emperor to deny them this privilege. That use of the term Protestant to which it has been lately applied, and of which you justly disapprove, is, therefore, an abuse. Our Church acknowledges one authority to

* The Lutheran and Reformed Churches have for some years been united in Germany under the name of the *Evangelical Church*, (Evangelische Kirche,) and the author adopts this name throughout the work. But as the term Evangelical is now used in a different sense in England, the translator has changed it into *Protestant*.—*M.*

which every Christian ought to subject himself, viz. the word of God in the Holy Scriptures. How can, therefore, Protestantism consist in the rejection of all authority but that of reason? But it is true enough that there has existed in our Church, since the time of Frederick the Great, a spirit of free-thinking, whose aim was to explain away all the peculiarities of Christianity.

Henry. I am glad that you own this, and I hope you will also acknowledge that the Roman Catholic Church is untainted with this spirit, and that there remains in it an unity of faith which is entirely wanting in the Protestant Churches.

Bernhard. Here you are mistaken, my dear Henry. That spirit of free-thinking which scoffs at all that is venerable in Christianity, and scarcely leaves natural religion unassailed, came from France, from *Roman Catholic* France. *Voltaire*, who signed himself in one of his letters "Scoffer of Christ," *(Christomoque,)* and boasted that he alone was able to overthrow an edifice which twelve men (the Apostles) had erected, *Boulanger Freret, De la Mettrie*, and others who styled themselves philosophers, these were the persons who transplanted to Berlin and to Germany the spirit of scoffing against religion. But this spirit of free-thinking in France was awakened by the obstinate adherence of the Roman Church to all her errors and abuses. In a country which had witnessed St. Bartholomew's night, and where in a short time after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the twentieth part of three millions of Protestants were executed, and more than half a million were banished, an union of the more enlightened persons against the outrages of the Romish priests, must naturally have been formed. That these persons overstepped their bounds, and endeavoured to overthrow Christianity itself with the Roman Church, was a lamentable but a natural error. Such extremes do not lie in the spirit of the Protestant Church, and you must own that they

were the Protestants who combated victoriously against the free-thinkers, and finally exposed them in their true colours.

Henry. But you have, however, even now among the Protestants of Germany, a party, the so called *Rationalists*, who subject the Holy Scriptures to reason, and wish to reduce Christianity within the compass of natural religion.

Bernhard. Has not the Roman Church also such a party? Were not the French free-thinkers, the Encyclopædists, Roman Catholics? Were they not Roman Catholics who, at the Revolution, abolished Christianity, though they were generous enough to decree that France should at least *believe in one God?* Of such free-thinkers we have had very few, and not one of them was a minister of the Gospel: even among these there were few who did not allow to Christianity some degree of divine interposition, and in their number there was but one minister of religion, Charles Frederick *Barth*, who was obliged to relinquish his pastoral office. But those who are now called *Rationalists* are very different from these; all of them acknowledge Christianity as a divine institution, ordained for the salvation of mankind; they own Jesus as the Messiah, and the Holy Scriptures as containing the true and eternal word of God, but they deny that God has acted here in a supernatural and immediate manner, and consider the mission of Jesus and his work of atonement as an operation of Divine Providence in general; they likewise form a distinction between those declarations of Scripture which, as general and eternal truths, are binding upon all ages, and others which refer to the conceptions and necessities of mankind in the days of Jesus and his Apostles. They will not assent to the established doctrine of the Church, that human reason is so corrupt as to be unable to distinguish truth, but they maintain, according to St. Paul, (Rom. i.) that reason is the first revelation of the Deity, and that the second revela-

tion, viz. Christianity, cannot oppose, but must confirm it. Some, therefore, assert that reason ought to be consulted in matters of religion, others only maintain that revelation contains nothing contrary to reason, while, again, others are of opinion that revelation *can* only contain what is agreeable to reason, and within its comprehension; they believe themselves justified in making this use of reason by the declarations of Jesus and his Apostles; they are, therefore, not unfaithful to the Protestant principle, which draws the lessons of faith and practice from the Scriptures.

Henry. It is, however, to be lamented, that such differences on doctrinal points should exist.

Bernhard. How will you prevent them? The Creator has so formed man, that he can only believe on the authority of *convincing arguments*, not from *mere inclination*, and that these arguments have not the same weight with every man. This is the case in the Roman Catholic, as well as in the Protestant Church, and the only difference is, that the Roman Catholic Church, by punishments or by the Inquisition, compels to silence, or to hypocrisy, such as express a difference of opinion in matters of faith, whilst the Protestant Church leaves the decision of such points to their innate truth, and to the strength of their inherent proofs. I should think this must be more agreeable to the will of the Deity, who, if he had required perfect unity of faith, would have found better means for that end than the horrors of the Inquisition and the condemnation of heretics, where erring men punish such, as they imagine to be in error, with the loss of life, liberty, property, or honour, without being able to impress them with a different conviction. It cannot, therefore, be urged as a well founded reproach against a Church, that there are divisions in it. The heathens made this a reproach against the Christians of the first centuries; in answer to which, Clement of Alexandria (Stromat. VII. 15.) very justly observes: "We are reproached by the heathens, that we, (the

Christians) cannot be believed on account of the different opinions and sects which prevail among us. But similar differences reign among the Jews and Greeks, and yet you do not say, that men ought, therefore, not to study philosophy, nor follow the Jewish doctrines. The Lord predicts that tares will grow among the wheat. Must no contracts be formed because many have been violated."

Henry. Would you, then, maintain that difference on points of faith is beneficial and desirable? This can, certainly, never have been the conviction of the Church, which must always insist upon unity of faith.

Bernhard. To be candid with you, I certainly do believe that different opinions concerning doctrinal points are salutary, and prevent that bigotry and lethargy, which are the *death of spiritual life.* As it was not the will of God that man should attain virtue without conflicts with sin, so it was not his will that he should arrive at truth without combats with error. Collision of opinion certainly awakens in many a blind party spirit, but to most persons it serves as a beneficial impulse for the discovery of truth. The disputes between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, in the Apostolical Church, produced their good effects; they were followed by the decree of the Apostles (Acts xv.) which made Christianity for ever independent upon Judaism. The Fathers of the early Church did not, therefore, lament the difference of creeds as an evil, as you do. "Truth," says Origen, (Homil. in Num. IX. 1.) "shines brighter from a comparison with error. Had the doctrines of the Church been perfectly simple, and not encompassed with the opinions of heretics, our faith would not have appeared so pure, and so well authenticated. The attacks of opponents beset the established doctrine, that our faith may not rust through inactivity, but be polished by exertion." The Apostle, therefore, says, (1 Cor. xi. 19.) "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest

among you." Cyprian, the venerable Bishop of Carthage, (de Unit. Eccles. p. 197.) expresses himself in the same terms. If the Church of the three first centuries, although it was persecuted by fire and sword, bore a diversity of religious opinions, without any evil consequences, surely we have less reason, in times when the Church enjoys peace, to apprehend any injury from a difference of creed.

Wilhelmina. I should think the excellent observation, that "the virtue which requires a guard, is not worth guarding," is also applicable to truth. A truth which requires violence and punishments to preserve it from declining, is not worth the pains bestowed upon it,—is *not* truth.

Henry. But the free use of Scripture, which you allow even to the unlearned, has, however, led to vain surmises and to fanaticism.

Father. That is true; but these errors were of little moment, and rarely extended to the Christian life. And if it be an evil that individual Christians fall into errors, through freedom of opinion and interpretation of Scripture, this is an unavoidable, but a small evil, which may be easily endured, and which, as long experience has proved, is best obviated by a mild method of instruction. But to seize, for that end, the desperate means which the Roman Catholic Church employs, to subject all Christians unconditionally to the decision of the priesthood, and to visit as heretics, with bans and punishments, all who doubt its infallibility, this appears to me such an intolerable tyranny over the conscience, that every other evil seems trifling in comparison to it. Why should *all* lose their natural and unalienable rights, because *some* among thousands abuse it. Would you convert the whole state into a mad-house, because a few of its members are deranged. The measure of abolishing all freedom of conviction, and of prescribing blind obedience to a few hundred priests, appears to me as if a great state, because a ship is occasionally wrecked, were to prohibit naviga-

tion to all its subjects, and permit it only to some islanders; Spain, for instance, to the inhabitants of Majorca.

Henry. I feel that the measure of binding the laity to an unconditional submission to the decrees of the priesthood, is injudicious.

Bernhard. Consider it in all its bearings! Are the few hundred bishops, who have assembled at the Councils since the fourth century, to have the right of imposing upon millions of Christians of their own, and of following ages, an eternally unchangeable code of faith! Who is responsible to us for their wisdom and impartiality? How few of them are so well known to us, that we can repose confidence in them! Did they not live in times of great fermentation, which confound the judgment? Do we not find, from many of their writings, that they interpreted the Bible very differently from each other, and that they, in general, did not understand Hebrew, and not always Greek? Have they not disputed with the greatest violence at their Councils? Had they been, as they affirm, inspired by the Holy Spirit, they would, at the Councils, with *one* mouth, and from *one* inspiration, as prophets, have delivered the same doctrines; but they disputed, were of different opinions, were, as other men, obliged to work their way by arguments on both sides of the question, and were, therefore, dependent upon their own abilities. Their debates were often accompanied by violent tumults. The Council of Ephesus, 449, supported its decisions by soldiers, sword in hand, and by monks armed with clubs. The Council of Trent, so important to the Roman Catholic Church, was often in the greatest disunion, and the Bishops contended even to the danger of an entire dissolution, so that the Archbishop of Palermo, Tagliava, once fell upon his knees in the midst of the assembly, and with tears and out-stretched arms, entreated the Bishops to agree with each other. Besides the number of priests at the Councils, who had the right of voting, was always very

small, and it is certainly preposterous, that a few hundred priests, some of whom had but narrow views and little learning, should prescribe articles of belief to one hundred and twenty-two millions of Roman Catholics, who are now said to exist, and among whom there are many learned, wise, and pious men. At the opening of the Council of Trent, there were present only twenty-five priests, who had the right of voting; the number gradually increased; but all the votes, when collected at the end of the Council, amounted only to two hundred and twenty-five, of which more than half were the votes of the Italian clergy. But most of the decrees of this Council were formed by no more than from seventy to eighty, or one hundred votes. And are these few persons to be considered as representatives of Christianity, and to be invested with the power of prescribing to all present and future Christians an eternally valid form of faith, and of punishing as a heretic, with the loss of honour, liberty, and life, any individual who dares to reject their decisions? Here, indeed, if any where, the warning of the Apostle (1 Cor. vii. 23.) is applicable:—"Ye are bought with a price; be ye not servants of men." It may be asked, if God intended to make the priesthood infallible through his Holy Spirit, why did he permit a part of them so frequently to fall into error and heresy, who were obliged to be condemned by another part, with violent measures, in tedious and expensive Councils?

Henry. I have certainly nothing to object to this. But what means will you propose to preserve the necessary unity of faith?

Bernhard. None whatever;—unity of faith, in your sense, is not necessary, because it is not possible. Therefore, Jesus (St. Matt. xiii. 24—30.) suffered the wheat and tares to grow together till the harvest. It is not the will of the Deity to deprive the human mind of all its self-dependence, through the form and letter of the articles of faith, and to effect such an unity as

that of watches set by the same regulator. Divine truth, has, without incurring any danger, been in all ages viewed by different men in different lights. Had this not been the case, the history of Biblical doctrines, and the history of the dogmas of the schools, could never have existed. But if a perfect identity of all religious conceptions be not possible, nor by any means attainable; if the Roman priesthood are not qualified to be infallible judges of faith, and never could establish or preserve unity of faith, it is folly to subject the laity to the decisions of the priesthood, and thereby to introduce a compulsion of the mind, which not only fails of its end, but is in the highest degree pernicious.

Henry. It appears to me, however, that a certain unity and stability of faith have been effected in the Roman Church, through the judicial power of the priesthood.

Father. You justly say "*a certain.*" For I have already shewn to you, how this pretended stability of faith is constituted in your Church. It is, indeed, only "a certain," since it is not effected by the strength of convincing arguments, but by the force of external violence; viz. by the most vehement persecution of those who will not believe without proofs. It is not, therefore, a real internal unity, but is merely apparent, external, and, consequently, by no means to be depended upon.

Bernhard. It is certain, that your pretended unity and stability of faith, is, partly, a mere appearance; partly, a pernicious evil.

Henry. I should be glad to hear a proof of this assertion! If you will produce it, I will retract all I have advanced to-day against your Church.

Bernhard. I *will* and *can* produce it. Tell me, do you understand by unity of faith, that the creeds of the Church remain the same, and harmonize together, or that all Roman Catholics understand the words of the creeds in the same sense, and in no other? The

latter, I suppose; for this stability and unity of faith, we Protestants have also, and in a much greater degree than the Roman Church, where the Popes and Councils frequently contradict and condemn each other openly.

Henry. I also receive unity of faith in the latter sense; for why are creeds framed, but that all may have the same view of the Christian doctrines? and, therefore, the creeds of our Church are established *decrees* of faith; while the Protestant Church declares hers, not as decrees, but merely as *testimonies* to the sense in which the Church receives the Holy Scriptures.

Bernhard. Very true:—but do you think it possible, that all men should, with the best will, view a formulary of faith in the same, and not in a different light?

Henry, (hesitating). That, according to experience, does not appear probable.

Bernhard. Say, rather, is it impossible. All men, for example, acknowledge the article, We believe in *One God.* But how different are the conceptions of Christians concerning God! The ignorant imagine him as a person in a human form; the enthusiast, as a light, which concentrates itself in one centre, the focus of life; another, as a spirit pervading the universe; another, as the abstract and author of the laws of the universe; again, another, as something indefinite, raised above all human conception, and not to be fathomed by the understanding, but only to be perceived in faith and feeling. It is the same with ideas concerning the Trinity, Angels, Hereditary Sin, Sacrament, Church, Resurrection, Purgatory, Heaven, Hell, &c. Words are empty sounds, which give us no ideas, if we do not already possess them. Words are only symbols of ideas, chosen by convention; they, therefore, only awaken those ideas in the mind, *which we already possess.* We must, consequently, form our ideas *ourselves*, concerning incomprehensible things; and the process of conceiving an invisible object and

a, indispensable as it is to all, produces an una-
dable difference of views concerning invisible ob-
ts and religious belief, because men differ infinitely
natural powers, in the exercise of these powers, in
igence and reflection, and, therefore, do not con-
ve their ideas in the same manner. The unity of
th, so much boasted of by you, is, therefore, no
her than that which we also have, viz. the *unity of
rds in the public creeds.*

Henry. But cannot these words be so definitely ex-
essed, that it may be impossible for any man, who
derstands the language, to receive them in more
an one sense. I should think that the Athanasian
reed, for example, is so framed, that it must neces-
rily awaken in all the same ideas concerning the
ctrine of the Trinity.

Bernhard. This is certainly the most definite and
e most unambiguous creed that we possess; but still
vines have disputed, whether the Trinity be an
tribute of the Deity, or what else in the Deity it
ay be. All the explanations which have been at-
mpted have yielded different results, and have de-
royed either the unity of the Divine Essence, or the
ifference of the Persons. Your Popes saw that the
nity of faith was not secured by the decrees of the
ouncil of Trent; they, therefore, publicly declared
at none should presume to explain the decisions and
ords of the Council of Trent, but that this explana-
on should be reserved for the Popes alone. In fact,
hey appointed in Rome a particular commission of
riests for this purpose. They thus gave to the world
remarkable proof, that the sense of public articles of
aith admits of different interpretations, and that a
General Council is not a sufficient means to effect
nity of faith among Christians.

Henry. I must own that this commission for ex-
plaining the decrees of the Council of Trent, stands
n open contradiction to the unity of faith, which is to
e secured by councils and decrees.

Bernhard. To be consistent, the decisions of the explanatory commission require likewise an explanation; for which purpose, another commission ought to be appointed, and, for explaining its decisions, still another, and so on. The whole Priesthood would thus become a number of commissions which explained each other, and still there would be no final decision, because the last explanation, as well as the first, would still be conceived by the faithful in a different sense.

Henry. But what do the Protestant Churches do? Where do they seek the final decision?

Bernhard. The first and last decision we seek in the doctrines of Jesus and his Apostles.

Henry. And what authority have you to declare the doctrines of Jesus and his Apostles as infallible?

Bernhard. Certainly not the authority of one man, or of a few men, but the authority of *proofs*, which every individual is at liberty to produce, because by proofs alone, a true and permanent conviction can be obtained; and a conviction founded on proofs, alone is worthy of the dignity of religion and of a rational being. St. Paul says to us, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good!"

Henry. But, for this reason, there are among you many different opinions.

Bernhard. There are so, and we do not wish to prevent them, because, as I have already shewn, God has so created man, that he can, by his own exertions, judge of the truth. This difference of opinion among individuals, does not, in the least, injure the main point, the Christian life, and enables us to fulfil the obligations of truth. But the pretended infallibility of your Priesthood at the councils, renders it impossible for your Church to correct an error once committed, or an abuse once confirmed. Your Council of Trent, three hundred years ago, has made purgatory, masses for souls, the withdrawal of the cup, transubstantiation, the celibacy of the clergy, the con-

demnation of all non-Catholics, indulgence, atonement by penances, and other things, as eternal articles of faith; and it is in vain that many intelligent Roman Catholics of the present day wish for some alteration on these points. In a Church which declares herself infallible, an error is eternal, and is supported by bans and punishments, as immoveable truth. The Church of Rome, therefore, maintains an endless contest with the progress of the sciences and the improvement of society. It cannot, as the Protestant, proceed at an equal pace with these, but must either sink into the stream of time, or endeavour violently to stifle the improvement of mankind, and again to restore the middle ages in which it arose, and in which it alone could flourish. This is what the Roman Priesthood of the present day openly attempt; but it will be attended with no better success than if an experiment were made to make a child of a grown man. Our public creeds, on the contrary, are not intended as decrees of faith, but only as testimonies how the Scriptures were understood at the time of the Reformation. We can, therefore, correct a past error, and unite the results of advancing science with the truths of Christianity. The Gospel of Nazareth, will, therefore, continue and grow; but the Gospel of Rome and of Trent will perish. Were I to compare mankind with a growing child, I would say, the Protestant Churches, which allow freedom of opinion on points of faith, and found conviction on proofs, are like an arbour of *living trees*, which grow up with the *child*, whose branches the *youth* trains higher, till they arch above the *man*, and form a friendly bower, in whose shade he gladly rests. But the Roman Church, which rigidly and immoveably adheres to its infallible and eternal articles of faith, is like an arbour of *dead wood*, constructed by the carpenter for the *child*, against which the *youth* soon strikes his head, and which the *man* leaves and clears away.

Henry. I am almost of opinion that we boast too much of the unity and stability of faith in our Church; that difference of religious views is unavoidable, and free from all danger; and that the explanation of the Word of God, by convincing arguments, is the most proper explanation.

Wilhelmina. Were it not presumptuous in me to interfere in such learned disputes, I might perhaps add a few words to enliven your serious countenances.

Father. Beneath the jest a serious truth may perhaps lie concealed. Let us hear it.

Wilhelmina. The Scripture says to the woman, (Gen. iii. 16.) *Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.* These words are very clear, and yet they have been in all ages differently interpreted. The Orientalist ruled over his wife in the strictest sense of the word, and she was his servant. Among the Greeks she was little more. Bernhard has given me some very good explanations on this subject. How these words are understood in these days, you all know. Many clergymen, when, in the marriage ceremony, they come to the words, "He shall rule over thee," add, as an explanation, in all *reasonable things.* But what is gained by this? Every woman and every man have their own peculiar ideas of reasonable things, on which they would scarcely agree if a whole treatise were written on reasonable things. All explanations of the words are in the end of little consequence, though they may be made by a whole assembly of infallible Popes. For every woman will either govern or be governed, in proportion to her influence over her husband. This appears to me to have been already the case in the most ancient times; for it strikes me, that Sarah and her daughter-in-law Rebecca also explained the words, "*He shall rule over thee,*" in their own way, although at that time the most rigid interpretation prevailed. What mischief can arise if women explain these ancient

words in a different sense, I certainly do not see. Hitherto, at least, the world and domestic affairs have gone on very comfortably.

Henry. You women explain every thing as it suits you. It would well become you to say with the virtuous Mary, "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord!*"

Wilhelmina. But when Mary said this, she had not an obstinate husband before her; but——an angel. It is not said that Mary used these words to Joseph her husband. If all men were angels——

Bernhard, (interrupting.) And all women were also angels, they would stand on an equal footing. But, jesting apart, you see, Henry, that men will always conceive points of faith in different lights, and that there cannot be a sufficient number of Popes and Councils to decide upon every point, and to compel men to adopt the same views of it. Therefore, every Church may have her written articles. She gains by them only unity of words in her public formularies, but not uniformity of ideas in the minds of men. Difference of opinion on religious points is natural, unavoidable, and accompanied with no danger to the truth. It is, therefore, not right to call each other heretics on this account, or by violent measures to enforce unity of faith. It is this violence which renders religious sentiments dangerous, whilst it eternalises error, creates fanaticism and hatred, and obstructs the natural developement of the human mind.

CHAPTER XIII.

One of the chief arguments against the Protestant Church, which had taken deep root in Henry's inexperienced mind, was the doctrine concerning the Priesthood, which he introduced on the following evening. He had been persuaded that the Roman Catholic Priests alone form the true Priesthood, descended from the Apostles, and lawfully called to instruct mankind, and to administer the sacraments, and, therefore, that they alone can effectually forgive sins, and duly administer the sacraments. His mother certainly thought that this was a subject which deserved but little attention, as it was of small importance; but his father was of a different opinion, as the doctrine concerning the Priesthood is a fundamental article of faith with the Roman Catholic Church; and Bernhard observed, that the proselyte-makers of earlier and more recent times, have always attempted, with great zeal, to confirm the reproach, that the Protestant Clergy have no right to their offices. To obviate unnecessary investigations, it was at once conceded to Henry, that Jesus and his Apostles had intended *overseers* and *teachers* of the flocks to be in the Church, and that the Apostles had ordained Bishops and Elders over the congregations. "On this general arrangement," they added, "the legitimacy of the Protestant Clergy is founded;" and they asked Henry why he objected to this legitimacy.

Henry. The Roman Catholic Church teaches, that Jesus and his Apostles not only ordained, as you

say, overseers and teachers in the congregations, but that they founded a particular class or order of Priests, to whom exclusively, and without any participation of the laity, the government of the Church, the right of teaching, of duly administering the sacraments, of forgiving sins, of deciding disputes of faith, ought to be assigned. Without the Priesthood, therefore, the layman can do nothing. The Priest must baptize him, and he, thereby, first becomes a Christian; the Priest must confirm him and absolve him at the confessional, celebrate mass for him, assist him out of purgatory, and, by all these means, open to him the gates of paradise, which the Priest alone is able to accomplish. Finally, the Priesthood has the exclusive right of determining what the laity are to believe as true, and to reject as false; what is true sanctification, and what are the proper means for attaining it.

Father. The Roman Catholic Priests are thus not *guardians* but *lords* of the *souls* of the laity, the most absolute sovereigns of the same, because they possess, in matters of religion, not only the executive, but the legislative power over the laity. These, pardon the expression, are the negroes, and the Priests the planters. Such Priests we certainly have not in the Protestant Church.

Henry. You cannot have them; for the rights of the Priesthood are derived from the Apostles, and are only communicated through the ordinations of the Priests. They can, therefore, only belong to that Priesthood, which descends by an uninterrupted chain of ordinations from the Apostles, and has, by this means, propagated and transmitted unchangeably the sacerdotal gifts. The Roman Catholic Clergy can trace the succession of their Bishops historically, from the Apostles, and, consequently, derive their Priesthood as genuine from Christ, its founder. The Protestant Clergy cannot do this: they can only derive their origin and right from the founders of the Reformation, Luther and Zwinglius.

Father. You have entirely forgotten, Henry, that Luther and Zwinglius were regularly ordained Priests of the Roman Catholic Church, and could, therefore, trace their ordinations through the Roman Catholic Church even to the Apostles, and transmit these ordinations, to the ministers of the Protestant Churches. You have forgotten that, at the time of the Reformation, a very great number of Roman Catholic Priests in Saxony, in the imperial cities, and in all Germany and Switzerland, and a still greater number in Denmark and Sweden, became Protestant Priests, and, therefore, brought over with them the ordinations of the Roman Catholic Church to our own Church.

Henry. I had not, indeed, thought of this, dear father; but I should think that Luther, and other Roman Catholic priests forfeited their ordinations when they renounced the Church of Rome and the Pope.

Father, (smiling). This is heresy, dear Henry; you must know that your Church and its Council of Trent have established the proposition, that the ordinations of the priests invest them with a sacerdotal character, which they *can never lose*, not even by suspension and excommunication, which, therefore, could not be lost by the Roman Catholic priests who became Protestants.

Henry. You are right, father; we must admit that Luther, Zwinglius, and others, always remained regularly ordained priests; but I believe they could not transmit these ordinations to others, because they separated themselves from the Pope and the Roman Catholic priesthood, and fell into heresy.

Father. Their heresy consisted in this, that they ascribed higher authority to the Holy Scriptures than to the decrees of the popes and the priesthood; that they, therefore, set the authority of Jesus and his Apostles, the founders of the priesthood, above the authority of the priesthood itself, the master above the disciple. They could not, on this account, be deprived

of the legitimacy of their ordinations in the sight of God and Christ. If those whom you call heretics lost the power of conveying to others the priestly ordinations, you will thus render the sacerdotal rights, even of the Roman Catholic clergy, doubtful; for from the first to the tenth century it was in the priesthood that the so called heresy frequently prevailed during very long periods. In the middle of the fourth century half of the Christian priesthood were Arians.

Bernhard. To this I add that the Bishops Dionysius of Milan, and Eusebius of Vercelli, were Arians, and that even the Roman priesthood at the Council of Arles (in the year 354) signed the condemnation of Athanasius, whose doctrine subsequently triumphed against Arius.

Father. As these pretended heretical bishops continued to ordain, and the persons on whom they laid their hands were not re-ordained, but again ordained others, a great number of the present Roman Catholic priests may, on this supposition, derive their ordinations from Arians and other heretics, and consequently not be legitimately *ordained.*

Henry. I feel that my ground is untenable, but the main point just strikes me; the ordinations of priests can only be performed by a bishop, consequently Luther, Zwinglius, and others, who were not bishops, could not transplant this right with them to the Protestant Church.

Father. If you consider it a point of such importance that the clergy should be ordained by bishops, you need only go to England or Sweden, where bishops alone, and these bishops deriving their mission as much as your own from the Apostles, are considered the competent authorities for ordaining the clergy. But you believe that supernatural gifts are conveyed by the bishop to those that receive ordination: by what means are these gifts conveyed?

Henry. By the imposition of the bishop's hands, whereby the Holy Spirit is communicated to the

priests, and they receive the power of teaching infallibly, of administering the sacraments efficaciously, and of presenting to God the sacrifice of mass.

Father. The English and Swedish bishops, to whom I have above referred, perform the office of ordination by the imposition of hands; yet they do not believe extraordinary graces of the Spirit to be thereby imparted; they conceive it to be a solemn form of admission into the sacred offices of the ministry, and maintain that it was observed by the Apostles. And they do believe that if the candidate at his ordination possess the necessary inward qualifications, these are confirmed by the divine blessing, and he is duly set apart for the office of the ministry by the imposition of the bishop's hands.

Henry. So the priesthood have no supernatural gifts which they can impart as an exclusive right to each other, and in which the laity have no part?

Father. How can you still ask this question? If you require an additional proof, reflect upon the Bishops, Presbyters, (priests) and Deacons from the first to the sixteenth century; they were scarcely ever unanimous in matters of faith. The priesthood were the fruitful source of opinions, which were again condemned as heresies by another part of their own body. The Photinians, Sabellians, Nestorians, Arians, Novatians, Adoptions, Eutychians, and many others whom you call heretics, had priests for their founders and priests for their defenders. The Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, all ordained priests, carried on the most bitter and tedious disputes with each other, which are not yet quite decided. And can this priesthood, one part of which has always been at war with and condemned by the other, be infallible, full of the Holy Spirit, and have the right of determining in an infallible manner what all Christians are to believe or not? And must we, on the bare word of this priesthood, believe an opinion concerning their pretended privileges, which they first broached and ad-

vanced as an article of faith, and which is so glaringly refuted by their practice?

Henry. I see clearly that I cannot, on the grounds which I have adopted, dispute the legitimacy of the ordinations of the Protestant priests.

Bernhard. But the case is not here at an end: we have conceded to you beforehand your idea of a priesthood, and have shewn you that the Protestant clergy are perfectly entitled to assume every privilege which you ascribe to your own priests. We might, however, have cut the matter short, and have said that Jesus and his Apostles did not intend to found a priesthood, *in the literal sense of the word*, in the Christian Church.

Henry. You cannot be in earnest.

Bernhard. I am perfectly in earnest. *Overseers* of the *flocks* and teachers of the Gospel they did intend, but not priests. What is a priest?

Henry. The Roman Catechism says, "The duty of a priest is to offer sacrifice to God, and to administer the sacraments." The propriety of this definition is clearly proved from the Old Testament.

Bernhard. But not from the *New*; we have already shewn you, when we treated of the mass, that the New Testament declares every sacrifice abolished by the death of Christ. There is no sacrifice to be repeated, and consequently no priest in the New Testament to perform it. And the Apostles never considered themselves as priests.

Henry. So Christianity has no priesthood?

Bernhard. Not in the Roman Catholic sense of the word: it certainly ought to have men set apart by competent authorities for the due discharge of the important duties of superintending and feeding the flocks of Christ, and of duly administering the holy sacraments. But these persons are not priests in the literal sense of the word, for they arrogate not to themselves the right of offering anew to God the sacrifice of Christ, which he himself offered in his own body,

once for all. And with respect to the power of forgiving sins, and opening the gates of Paradise, they leave this, with all due humility, to Him alone to whom it belongs, the High and Mighty One that inhabiteth eternity.

Henry. I really do not know what to say against this. But is there not something very soothing in the belief that the priesthood take care of the forgiveness of our sins, of our salvation, and of our right faith?

Father. So the advocates for slavery say. It is very comfortable that the slaves have not to think of house, food, or clothing, all which are provided for them by their masters; but they forget that the slave has nothing of his own, must obey unconditionally, and bear all the caprices of his master and all the lashes of the overseer without a murmur; and the Roman Catholic priests have finely lashed the backs of the laity. But this might be borne if they could really perform what they promise, and for which they pretend to usurp such unlimited authority over the souls of men. The master gives his slaves food, clothes, and dwellings, all his own property; but the priests make assignments upon Paradise, which does not belong to them, but to God, upon the forgiveness of sins, which does not depend upon them, but upon the mercy of God, and, therefore, upon future blessings, which they do not possess themselves, and which they can obtain even for themselves only through the grace and favour of God. How can you believe that this priesthood is filled with the Holy Spirit, with wisdom, and holiness, when you read the complaints of all ages against the pride, hard-heartedness, excesses, and vices of the Popes and Priests? I do not deny that there have been many pious, venerable, and excellent Bishops and Priests, and even Popes; but it is equally certain that there have been many of a different description, extremely rude, debauched, ignorant, wicked, and despicable; there is, therefore, found among them the same mixture of wisdom and folly, of virtue and

vice, which is observable among the laity; consequently the priests do not possess any exclusive spiritual gifts, but are as subject to error and to sin as the laity.

CHAPTER XIV.

On the following morning Henry examined the essay which he had written in Frankfort, to see what arguments remained in reserve in defence of his secession to the Roman Church. He found only two points, namely, that the Catholic mode of worship is preferable to the Protestant, and that the Roman Catholic Church receives a peculiar dignity from the saints and martyrs. He certainly felt rather doubtful on these two points, but he determined to communicate them to his family, and to hear their opinion, in order finally to come to a perfect understanding with them and with himself; he, therefore, on the following evening, led the conversation to the Roman Catholic mode of worship, and ascribed to it two advantages over the Protestant service, the one, that it observes a much greater number of festivals, and gives, therefore, a stronger incitement to devotion, and the other, that it addresses itself more to the senses, and by its splendour and its rites becomes a more lively and impressive image of invisible things, and personifies them to the feelings. But he soon wished that he had rather remained silent on the number of festivals in his Church, because this was the very point which his family objected to the Roman Church. The festivals, they said, have been so accumulated, that their number has impeded the progress of business and the industry of the people, so that even Catholic princes have been obliged to acknowledge this, and to render the introduction of new religious festivals dependent on their

nion. They also remarked that many festivals refer circumstances which must undoubtedly be consi-ed as historical or religious errors, as, for example, e festival of the spotless conception of the Holy rgin, Corpus Christi, the Assumption of the Virgin, l Saints, All Souls: (namely, those in purgatory,) e numerous festivals of saints and martyrs, many of nich refer to very unauthentic legends. They op-sed to him the commandment in the old covenant, *Six* days shalt thou labour and do all that thou hast do," and although the celebration of the seventh ay has been abolished in Christendom, and the first ay of the week has been appointed as the Lord's day, et the ordinance of the six days of labour still de-erves to be highly venerated, and to establish fes-ivals almost equal in number to working days must e contrary to the will of God.

The second point, the superiority of the Roman Catholic worship, in the impression it produces on the senses of mankind, was discussed more at large. Henry referred to the strong impression which the Church solemnities in Rome produce on so many fo-reigners, and which Schiller, in his tragedy of Mary Stuart, has so eloquently depicted in the character of Mortimer. But he received in answer, that Rome was no standard for the impression of the Roman Ca-tholic worship in general. "In a city," said his fa-ther, "where the primate is at the same time a tem-poral prince, and his person, when he appears publicly as priest, is surrounded by all the temporal majesty of a throne, where the inferior priests are at the same time the principal officers of the state, and where the Church ceremonies are invested with all the magnifi-cence which the uncontrouled will and wealth of a monarch can command, divine service will naturally be performed with a splendour which can no where else be found. But the city of Rome, with her dome of St. Peter, is not the Catholic world, and the king-priest, the Pope, with his court, is not the Roman Ca-

tholic Church. We must, therefore, view the ceremonies in themselves, and not as they are performed in Rome."

"But quite independently of Rome," said Henry, "the rites and services of the Catholic Church are calculated to make a far stronger impression on the mind than the ordinances of the Protestant Church. These occupy the understanding alone, not the religious feeling; they are, therefore, only adapted for the inhabitants of the cold north, where sensibility and imagination are chilled, and not for the animated French, Italians, Spaniards, and the southern nations in general; these require entertainment, something to attract the senses, and to excite the imagination and the feelings."

Father. I have already often heard this argument, particularly from the enemies of the Protestant Church in France, and I have always been not a little astonished at it, because it is completely overthrown by the single example of the Mahometans. No religion in the world has such simple and so few rites as the Mahometan. Their mosques are void of all ornament, all images, all that can excite or intoxicate the senses, and are only adorned with verses from the Koran. Their worship consists in fasting, ablutions, and prayers. They are perfectly satisfied with this plain and simple mode of worship, and are fanatically enthusiastic for their religion. And yet they live not only in the warm but in the hot regions of the globe, compared to which Italy, Spain, and France, must be considered as cold; you find them in Asia Minor, in burning Arabia, in hot India, in Persia, in Egypt, with its sky eternally serene, in the interior of Africa, and in its burning deserts. The argument, therefore, that the climate of France, Italy, and Spain, require the worship of God in spirit and in truth to be made a spectacle, and that there can be no devotion there without the aid of pilgrimages, processions, mass, images of saints and the Virgin, has always been very offensive

to me, and is a degradation of these distinguished nations. The populace certainly is every where alike, and is delighted with all that attracts the eye or charms the ear. The taste of the populace, however, must not become a law to us, but we must endeavour to improve it. That this can be done, even in southern countries, you see by the reformed in France and Switzerland, who, with a far more simple worship than ours, are still zealous followers of the Gospel, and have in France repeatedly proved themselves steadfast martyrs to their faith, and have withstood all temptations of deserting their creed. And has it been found necessary to establish another mode of worship for the Dutch and English in their colonies, situated even in the torrid zone, in the West Indies, South Africa, the East Indies, and the Indian Peninsula, because they live under a burning sun, and are not surrounded by the cold mists of the mother countries? But if it were true, as you say, that the south cannot dispense with religious spectacles, and that the North produces only men of mere cold understandings, then the Creator himself would thereby intimate to us that Roman Catholicism is not adapted to the North, and you would have no right to condemn and persecute us. All this is perfectly groundless: if the inhabitant of the South have a lively imagination, we ought not to call the aid of religion to foster his dangerous disposition, to give him nothing but religious spectacles, and to encourage his excesses by endless absolutions and ever ready indulgences. By these means his levity is only increased, while the innumerable festivals nourish and foster the inclination to idleness, engendered by the climate. We ought rather to give him a mode of worship which may cool his imagination, moderate his warmth, and accustom him to reflection, and not to the indulgence of reveries.

Henry. If I even allow this, dearest father, there still remains one point, namely, that the Roman Catholic service represents the invisible and mysterious

part of religion in noble and edifying paintings and rites, which are entirely wanting to you.

Father. Answer you this, Bernhard.

Bernhard. Let us see, Henry, what advantages you have over us. A sermon we have, and much more so than you; the Lord's Supper also, and not administered only in part, as with you, but entire, as Jesus has instituted it; confession we have likewise; chanting, prayers, baptism, marriage ceremony likewise; our confirmation answers to yours; the principal festivals of the Church we celebrate as well as you: we, like you, have Churches, organs, bells, choristers, prayers of the ministers and responses of the congregation, the consecration of ministers, and solemn installation into their benefices. In addition to this you have processions and pilgrimages, of which you must allow that they contribute very little, perhaps not at all, to devotion; you have images of saints, holy water, incense, the consecration of bells; all trifles not worth mentioning. The principal point is the *mass*, and that alone.

Henry. You are right: it is the mass which constitutes the decisive distinction; it forms the chief rite of the Catholic service, and takes the precedence of all others, even of the sermon.

Bernhard. If we listen to the writers of your Church, the mass is the most sublime and the most edifying rite that can exist. But let us hear of what your mass consists, namely, that mass which the priest celebrates alone, and not the Lord's Supper, which we have also. The Council of Trent, in the twenty-second session, declares the mass to be a sacrifice in which the priest offers to God, without effusion of blood, the same Christ who hung on the cross as an expiation for sins and crimes, even if they be monstrous, *(etiam ingentia,)* a sacrifice which the priest presents, not only for the sins of the living, instead of punishments and penances, and *for other necessities, (pro aliis necessitatibus,)* but also for de-

ceased Christians, who have not yet been completely purified in purgatory. The Council at the same time approves, not only of public masses, where the congregation is present; but it also approves, yea recommends *(commendat)* private masses, which the priest celebrates in an empty Church, and ordains the mass always to be held in the Latin tongue. Is it not so?

Henry. It is so.

Bernhard. The chief idea on which this rests is, therefore, this, that the priest in performing mass offers the body of Christ anew to God. But this very point of the mass, forming the principal part of the Roman Catholic service, ought to give you a perfect clue to the constitution of the Roman Church, her mode of worship, and her fundamental distinction from the Protestant Church. The character of the Roman Church is that of a sacerdotal Church. In the fourth century the ideas associated with the priesthood of the Old Testament were transferred to the Christian bishops; they were no more considered what the Apostles had been, and what the Apostles had intended them to be, namely, teachers, models, and presidents of the congregations, but as mediators between God and man, who were to sacrifice to God for mankind, and to obtain for them grace and atonement with the Almighty. As soon as this idea became prevalent, all the ministerial rites of the bishops and the other clergy were supposed to possess a sacerdotal, that is, an atoning, expiatory power with God. In the eyes of Christians their performance of the rites of baptism, confirmation, and marriage, now obtained such an influence on the invisible world. And this is the fundamental distinction between the Protestant and the Roman Catholic modes of worship, that we ascribe to ours no supernatural influence on the Deity, but merely a moral influence on man. Our service is calculated to enlighten the understanding to the knowledge of God, to awaken the disposition to Christian virtue, and to purify the heart, and render it sus-

ceptible of pious impressions. Therefore, the sermon, founded on the word of God, combined with singing and prayers, forms the principal part of our service. The Roman Catholic service, as a sacerdotal one, is to operate on the invisible world, on the Deity, and to move him to mercy and to the remission of punishment. Therefore the sermon is a secondary object; at every celebration of divine service a sacrifice is required, and this is performed by the priest's administering the Lord's Supper to himself, and thus presenting to the Deity a continued offering.

Henry. But is there not something consoling in this continued offering, which daily procures for us the grace which our daily faults require?

Bernhard. This ever ready sacrifice of mass, always to be obtained for money, may certainly be consoling for him who wishes constantly to commit new sins: he will not feel much compunction for his sins; for as the Father Arnobius (adv. Gentes VII. p. 128.) very justly says, "the number of sinners increases when the hope of absolution is held out; and we easily indulge in criminal actions where pardon is saleable." But this reliance on the mass is not only very dangerous to morality, but it is likewise perfectly groundless. What conceptions must we form of the Deity and his mercy, if we can believe, that, as soon as the priest presents an offering, God is compelled to change his disposition towards the sinner? For such a compulsion must be understood in a sacrifice and its effects upon the Deity, because, if the mercy of God were voluntary he would not require the sacrifice of mass by the priest. But this notion of a constantly renewed sacrifice of mass has not the slightest foundation in Scripture. I leave it to you to point out to me one single passage in the New Testament in which the Lord's Supper is represented as a new sacrifice offered to God; I will not ask you to find a proof that the priest is to make this offering. Throughout the New Testament, though atonement through the death of

Christ is often mentioned, you will not meet with a single passage which distantly intimates that a repetition of Christ's sacrifice takes place, or is to take place. This notion is rather contradicted throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, the aim of which is to prove, that by the sacrifice of Christ's death, once offered, all other sacrifices are rendered unnecessary to Christians. To give only a few examples from this epistle, hear the following verses.

Chap. vii. 27. "Christ needeth not daily, as those High Priests (of the old Testament) to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people; *for this he did once*, when he offered up himself."

Chap. x. 12. "But Christ, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

Chap. ix. 25—28. "Nor yet that he should offer himself *often*, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; for then he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now, *once* in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was *once* offered, to bear the sins of many."

Chap. x. 10. 14. 18. "By the which will (of God) we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all: For by one offering he hath perfected for ever* them that are sanctified. Now where remission of sin is, there is no more offering for sin."

Can any thing be more explicit than those passages? Is not the repetition of Christ's sacrifice in any form declared unlawful and perfectly superfluous? And does St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, where he treats so amply of the Lord's Supper, express the most distant hint, that the Lord's Supper is a second offering, that the Priest alone is to partake of it, and to sacrifice Christ anew thereby?

Henry. I allow that no mention whatever is made in the New Testament of a second sacrifice.

Bernhard. Say rather, that a second sacrifice is, in a direct manner, declared unlawful and superfluous. Consequently, the fundamental principle of your Church, which regards the mass as a sacrifice, is an error, contrary to Scripture, and all that your Church teaches concerning the efficacy of mass, particularly that which is performed in private, and for departed souls, is perfectly unfounded. But this is not the only error on which you build the mass. The second error, which is equally great, and on which so much importance is laid, is, that the bread and wine are, by the consecration of the Priest, changed into the body and blood of the Saviour; together with which (as the Council of Trent, thirteenth session, says) the soul and Godhead of Christ are present, (verum domini nostri corpus, verumque ejus sanguinem una cum ipsius anima et divinitate existere.) But this transubstantiation directly contradicts itself. Yet upon this point rests the belief, that the host is the body of our Lord, and is presented to God as a renewed sacrifice. I will not even take notice of the contradiction which follows, from the Priest himself partaking of the host, and thus appearing to present the sacrifice, not to God, but to himself,—a custom which directly opposes the rites observed in the Old Testament, where the offering made to the Almighty was either sprinkled against the altar or burnt, but was never eaten by the Priests, although a part of it was allotted to them. Other errors combine with this, namely, that of purgatory and the mass for departed souls; again, masses performed for various exigencies in life, (aliis necessitatibus,) so that you have a mass read for fine weather, for a prosperous journey, for the increase of flocks, and other things, to which the great sacrifice of Christ can never be referred. But if the principles on which the mass is founded are erroneous, it is clear that it cannot awaken a proper devotion, unless the believer turns

unbeliever, and attaches quite different ideas to the mass, and in his private devotion, interprets it otherwise than prescribed by his Church. But all ceremonies, grounded on erroneous ideas, which must be interpreted in a different sense, if they are to excite devotion, and not to give offence, are false, improper, and superstitious, and ought not to be admitted into the worship of Christians. A ceremony is the allegorical representative of an idea, and ought, therefore, to correspond to it, as the garment fits to the body. It receives dignity and force only when it is founded upon truth; otherwise it is empty and injurious.

Henry. I feel that you are in the right. I myself have, for my own edification, generally attached other ideas to the mass, and have viewed it as an image of the omnipresence of God.

Bernhard. The magnitude and presence of the Deity display themselves more forcibly to you when you contemplate the starry heaven, with its radiant host, than when you see the Priest at the altar of the Church. And have you not felt the loss of our beautiful hymns in the Catholic Church?

Henry. I cannot deny that the singing in Protestant Churches, through the composition and form of the hymns and psalms, surpasses all our liturgy in the Catholic Church, and that it is peculiarly adapted to excite devotion. I confess that several of our hymns, which were still floating in my memory, afforded me, even in Rome, sincere edification.

Bernhard. You must likewise allow the powerful influence of our Church prayers in public devotion: prayers offered in a language which all can understand, and in which the whole congregation joins in loud responses. And consider the impression made by our sermon. We have certainly obtained a wonderful advantage over you by substituting a sermon in the place of the mass. By this, pulpit eloquence has with us attained to a perfection which has had the most beneficial influence on the extension of Chris-

tian knowledge and morality. Our ministers have become models to Roman Catholic Germany, and a single sermon of Reinhard, Dräseke, &c. affords more salutary nourishment to a pious mind, than the eternal sameness of the most solemn mass. Tell me, what sermons have you heard in Italy, that have edified and improved you?

Henry. All this I must concede to you, for it is but too true, that the sermons which I have heard in Italy, far from edifying me, were often, in a high degree, offensive to me. In Roman Catholic Germany this is not the case; but I believe that the clergy there owe their superiority to the vicinity and influence of the Protestant ministers.

CHAPTER XV.

"My dear Henry," said Antonio, the next morning, "I am rid of a very great fear, which has hitherto often tormented me, and I feel new-born, free as the bird in the air."

Henry, (smiling.) I suppose it is again some discovery in your New Testament, which puts you in such ecstacy.

Antonio. And can there be any harm in that, dear Henry? Has not this book been given to us that we may search in it? Oh, I bless the hour that gave it into my hands! It has turned the darkness that surrounded me into light, and instead of the fetters which bound me to the earth and to the mercy of the Priesthood, it has given me wings which raise me to God, who is also my Father, and who does not, like the Priest, treat me as a slave: it has made me feel His mercy, of which no power of man can deprive me.

Henry. Well, and what is it that you have discovered?

Antonio. That there is no *purgatory*, in which my soul is to be tormented.

Henry. But what idea do you form of purgatory? You certainly view it in a gross and physical light, as if it were a coal fire, in which your soul will endure all the pain which you feel when you burn yourself. But many good Catholics form a more refined idea of purgatory. They only regard it as a purification of the soul from all the dross of sin, but do not determine the process by which this is performed. For the

holy Council of Trent has certainly established that a purgatory exists, but it has not determined what conception we are to form of it.

Antonio. That is a mere subterfuge, my dear Henry. The Holy Council cannot have attached any other idea to the term, than what had, till then, been generally understood by purgatory, viz. absolute fire: wherefore, it says, that the soul shall be "*tormented*" therein. The so called refined idea, is, therefore, nothing but a subterfuge, by which they endeavour to evade a doctrine, the falsehood of which manifests itself but too evidently. If it be a state of *torment*, and if compassion induce us to have a number of masses read for the deliverance of the soul from this torment, we must consider it as fire, or as some state of acute pain.

Henry. You are right; the Church considers it as such a state.

Antonio. But is not the prospect of a purgatory, in which pious souls are to be tormented after death, something terrible, which must not only embitter the hour of death to a good Christian, but must haunt him with fear during his whole life? And how dreadful the idea, when a friend, a husband, a father, a mother dies, that, notwithstanding the pious life they have led, we must expect them to enter a state of torment, the very idea of which fills us with horror!

Henry. But, Antonio, you are aware, that the Church has the means of delivering souls from purgatory, namely, the mass for departed souls!

Antonio. Very true! After the Church has made us fear and tremble, she offers us her helping hand. Does it not appear as if men were terrified, only in order to be again comforted, and as if purgatory had been invented for the sake of soul-mass, and not the mass for purgatory? But of what avail are soul masses for a poor creature like me, as they cost money? The Church does not make it easy to get out of purgatory, for one soul-mass does not suffice: for the rich, who

can afford to pay for many masses, numbers are read; for sovereign princes even thousands are held. But if one mass were sufficient to deliver from purgatory, it would be a sinful prodigality to offer the body of our Lord, hundreds, yea, thousands of times, when the first offering had already produced the desired effect. If, therefore, so many masses—how many I cannot even tell—be required to escape the torments of purgatory, you see that the consolation of the Church is only a consolation for the rich and great, who can afford to pay for many masses, but not for the poor, who must abide their time in purgatory. "The poor *have the Gospel (glad tidings) preached to them*," says our Saviour, when he, (St. Matt. xi. 5.) answers the messengers of John. But purgatory is not glad tidings,—and for the poor it is fearful tidings. But, throughout the New Testament, not one single word is said of purgatory.

Henry. Perhaps you do not know, Antonio, that the passage 1 Cor. iii. 13, 14. usually is quoted in proof of purgatory.

Antonio. I know that very well; but only read the passage from ver. 9—17. in connexion, and the purgatory of the soul will immediately disappear. St. Paul warns the Christians not to raise parties, nor to follow one noted teacher more than another. All labourers, he says, build at the temple of God, that is, at the Christian community, by their doctrines, but whether the foundation be stone, wood, or stubble, the fiery ordeal of distress and persecution will decide. Then the building raised on wood and stubble will be burned, and the master-builder, namely, the teacher, even if he save himself, will only save himself by fire, that is, not without great danger. Here St. Paul does not speak of departed souls, but of Christian communities on earth, during the time of persecutions. The fire is the image of severe trials, but it does not signify real fire; for the building also allegorically refers to the Christian community, and stone, wood, and stubble,

which are to stand the fire, refer to good and evil doctrines, truth, and error. We should be inconsistent if, in this simile, we were to interpret fire in a literal sense, and the expressions, temple, stone, wood, stubble, in an allegorical sense.

Henry. This passage certainly proves nothing, nor have I myself paid any regard to this proof; but you have not, however, found any thing in contradiction to the existence of purgatory.

Antonio. Indeed, I have found quite sufficient, and it is just this, that, to my extreme joy, has delivered me from my great fears. It would already suffice me, that Jesus and the Apostles, who so often and so explicitly speak of our future state, do not say one word of purgatory, for they could not have passed over it in silence. But they speak in terms that plainly shew, that for pious souls purgatory cannot exist. Of the beggar Lazarus, Jesus says, (Luke xvi. 22.) "and it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;" therefore, not into purgatory. To the malefactor at the cross, he exclaims, (St. Luke xxiii. 43.) "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise;" and this malefactor had been a highway robber, whose soul had certainly more stains than the soul of a pious man. In this I put my trust, and I have, therefore, renounced all belief in purgatory, and have thrown aside all apprehensions on the subject. And what shall I think of the mercy of God? Can I bless the mercy of the Father who allows me to be tormented and purified in a cruel fire, although his Son has given his life as an expiation for my sins, and the priest has incessantly repeated this offering for me, and I have used my utmost exertions to keep his commandments? And how can we form an idea of this, without considering the soul as a material object? The whole conception is taken from metals, which are melted and purified in the fire. But the soul cannot be so gross as a piece of metal, which is passed through the fire.

Henry. We can certainly not view the subject in such a light, although the Church has conceived it so.

Antonio. I believe that we cannot form any idea of it. I see this from the manner in which I myself have been purified from the dross of sins which I brought from Italy, by this invaluable book (holding up the New Testament). It was done without fire, without torments, though not without repentance. I learnt to feel the truth and excellence of the Gospel, I began to love it, I determined to act agreeably to its precepts; I did so, and I continue to do so, according to my best endeavours;—this is the history of my purification, and no man can be purified in a different manner. Repentance purifies him, as it purified the prodigal son in the eyes of his father, who did not make him pass through purgatory, before he received him again, but at once prepared a feast for him. Of this repentance, St. Paul says, 2 Cor. vii. 10. "For godly sorrow" (for past transgressions) "worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." To salvation, therefore, not to purgatory. And the same Apostle says, Rom. vi. 7. "For he that is dead, is freed from sin."

Henry. Oh, Antonio, what light has burst in upon your soul! You are a happy man!

Antonio. I feel this, and I am grateful to God. But I am so only through the Gospel, to which alone I will henceforth adhere. In me has been fulfilled, what our Saviour says, "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Henry. Adhere to it, in the name of God, Antonio. I, at least, will not lead you into any other path than the one which you yourself tread, under the guidance of the Gospel.

Antonio. That you would attempt in vain.—How blind I was, when, on my arrival in Protestant countries, I was astonished that the pretended heretics were so prosperous, so industrious, so upright, and

moral! I see the Gospel effects daily in them by what it has effected in me; it makes them better and more contented. And such men are acceptable to our heavenly Father.

CHAPTER XVI.

HENRY had not ended this conversation without a certain feeling of shame. Antonio, who had worked his way by the light of the Gospel, out of the erroneous conceptions which his education had engrafted upon his mind, was a mortifying reproach to Henry, who had suffered himself to be drawn from the Protestant truth into such erroneous conceptions. He acknowledged more and more his past precipitancy; his repentance became more and more sincere, and he would have given much to be able to undo what he had done. The thought of returning to the Protestant Church often recurred to him, but it was always suppressed by a feeling of shame, lest he should, by such a return, appear to the world a thoughtless and wavering character, or a weak-minded person, who could easily be over-persuaded. The usual method of finally composing this wavering state of mind, was the comfort that he might be a good Christian, as a Roman Catholic, let his creed be what it would. On the following evening, he gave his family an account of the change which the perusal of the Scriptures had produced in Antonio's mind. They were not entirely unacquainted with it, but did not think that he had already made such a progress. Henry acknowledged that he was not equal to him in producing Scriptural proofs, and that he had, only that morning, so convincingly proved the non-existence of purgatory, that he himself could no longer believe in it.

Bernhard. I only wonder, dear Henry, that you

ever believed in it, as it is so evident a remnant of heathenism. The whole conception of it is founded on the system of Zoroaster, who lived, before Christ, in Media. He was a fire-worshipper, and taught, as his writings, which are still extant, shew, that, at the end of time, the world must pass through a stream of fire, whereby it will be purified into light. The Platonic philosophers among the Greeks, received from him the idea of a purification after death. From these sources, the opinion flowed to a few Fathers of the Church, such as Origen and Augustin, both of whom, however, appear to have considered the matter rather as an image of moral improvement. But this opinion was not an article of the Church; it was only made so by Pope Gregory, in the sixth century, and spread itself, at first, only gradually in the Church. The fear of purgatory, from which the priest alone could deliver, was too profitable to the priesthood, and the masses for the dead, founded upon it, too lucrative to overthrow the notion when it had once existed. The Council of Trent has established it as an eternal article of faith to the Roman Catholic Church, and has thus sealed as a Christian doctrine, what was, in its origin, as foreign to Christianity as the worship of *angels*, *saints*, and *martyrs*.

Henry. What? do you declare this worship as foreign to Christianity? I trace in it the pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Church, that she has such a number of saints and martyrs, who are her ornaments, and who are entirely wanting to the Protestant Church. These heroes of faith and humility afford an excellent testimony to the truth of Roman Catholic Christianity, and their example is a powerful stimulus to the faithful.

Father. As much as I know of the legends of the so called saints, we have no reason to envy you this advantage. But allowing that the saints of your Church were really saints, your boast of them is absurd. As your Church did not exist before the

eleventh century, the apostles, saints, and martyrs, of the first thousand years, did not belong to you exclusively, but to the whole Church, and, consequently, to us also. But to honour them together with the angels, to consecrate churches, altars, and festivals to them; to pray to them, to reckon on their intercession with God; this we justly consider wrong. What do your creeds then say on these points?

Merry. The Council of Trent, in its twenty-fifth session, says, "The Bishops shall teach that the saints offer their intercessions to God for men; that it is good and profitable humbly to invoke, and to have recourse to their intercessions, *services*, and *assistances*, for the obtainment of favours from God, through his Son Jesus Christ, who is our only Saviour."

The Roman Catechism, in the third section, says, "Angels also are to be invoked, partly because they stand continually in the presence of God, and partly because they gladly undertake the guardianship of our welfare. There are proofs of Scripture for this invocation. Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 26.) prayed to the angel with whom he had wrestled, to bless him." The same Catechism says, section fourth, "The Holy Church justly directs thanksgivings and invocations to be made to the most Holy Mother of God, that she *may reconcile us sinners with God through her intercessions*, and procure us *temporal* and *eternal* blessings." The Roman Catholic Church, therefore, assigns to these intercessors a certain degree of worship, selects them as protectors of individuals, of Churches, of provinces, and countries, and teaches that they are able to ward off from us all sorts of misfortunes, and to procure for us all kinds of blessings.

Mother. I am not a learned woman, but I would venture to refute from Scripture, with great ease, the whole assembly of Bishops at Trent. For the doctrines of your Bishops are so diametrically at variance with the Scriptures, that it is not easy to account how they could have spoken in such perfect opposition to

the Word of God. They say that the saints and the Holy Virgin ought to be invoked; but the Lord says, (Psalm l. 15.) "Call upon *me* in the day of trouble, and *I* will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." In Psalm cxlv. 18, 19. it is said, "The Lord is *nigh* unto all that call upon Him. *He will also hear their cry, and will save them.*" It is not, therefore, necessary that we should be first presented and recommended to Him by the Holy Virgin and the saints. Jesus also teaches us to pray to God without intercessors, when he (St. Matt. vi. 9.) says, "After this manner, therefore, pray ye; *Our Father, which art in heaven.*" Yea, Jesus expressly warns his disciples against imagining that they dare not pray to God himself, and apply to him alone. St. John xvi. 26. "And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father *himself* loveth you."

Henry. But, dear mother, is not intercession for others a general duty? Ought not, therefore, the saints in heaven to fulfil this duty?

Mother. Intercession for others, as we learn from 1 Tim. ii. 1. St. Luke vi. 28. St. James v. 15. is certainly the duty of love; but all these passages of Scripture treat only of the intercession of the living for the living, and not of the dead for the living. But this intercession is no where represented *as necessary for us, that we may obtain assistance from God.* The New Testament acknowledges only one intercessor in heaven for us, and that is, not the Holy Virgin and the saints, but Jesus Christ, "who (Rom. viii. 34.) is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." 1 John ii. 2. "And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This is also stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iv. 15, 16. vii. 24, 25. We do not, therefore, stand in need of the intercession of saints and angels. "Ask," it is said, "and it shall be given you." Still less Christian is it to *worship*, in any degree, saints and angels. In Isaiah xlii. 8. it is said, "I am the Lord,

that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Jesus commands, (St. Matt. iv. 10.) "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." and, Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 8, 9. we read, that, when St. John had fallen down before the angel to worship him, the angel refused this honour in these words; "I am thy fellow-servant, (also a servant of God) and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: *worship God.*" St. Peter also would not receive this honour, but said to Cornelius, (Acts x. 26.) who had fallen down at his feet, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." You do not, therefore, find, in the New Testament, a single example of the intercession of the dead for the living, or of angels for us. The example of the angel, whom Jacob besought to bless him, adduced by the Council of Trent, is nothing to the purpose. Jacob and Esau were blessed by Isaac, and Ephraim and Manasseh by Jacob. Can we, on this account, say that they worshipped Isaac and Jacob? You see, therefore, that the Scriptures refer us, every where, with our prayers, immediately to God; and not to saints and martyrs; and it is still more contrary to the Word of God, that we should *worship* these.

Henry. You are mistaken, mother, if you believe that the Roman Catholic Church permits the *adoration* (adoratio) of saints and angels; this is due to God alone; she only appoints them *reverence* by an *invocation* of their intercession and assistance.

Mother. This distinction is a mere play of words. It is written in Scripture, "Call upon me, not upon an angel, in the time of trouble." To call upon the name of God, or to invoke God, frequently stands in Scripture for worshipping God, and praying to him. And if there were a difference between adoration and reverence or invocation, it would certainly be unintelligible to the people, who would still be led thereby to a kind of idolatry.

Father. This becomes also thereby a stumbling-

block to me, that, by invoking angels and saints, we can scarcely consider them otherwise than as demi-gods. For, he who believes in earnest that the Holy Virgin and the saints hear his prayers, must consider them as a sort of omnipresent and omniscient beings. St. Gregory, for instance, is invoked, at the same instant, in Rome, Naples, Piemont, Sicily, Austria, Bavaria, France, Spain, Portugal; in Mexico, Chili, Peru, the Brazils, St. Domingo, and in other places. Either he must be present as God in all these places, to hear these invocations, or he must, as God, be omniscient, to know of all these prayers, sighs, and silent vows, or he can hear nothing of this, and, consequently, afford no assistance. This is particularly striking in the case of the Holy Virgin, who is most generally honoured and invoked. There are computed to be about one hundred and twenty-five million Roman Catholic and forty million Greek Christians, most of whom repeat daily their "*Ave Maria*" Thirty live dispersed over the whole world. The blessed spirit of the Virgin Mary is said to hear them all, and to present their prayers to God. Is it not evident that the Roman Catholics must thereby suppose that the Holy Virgin is a kind of goddess, omniscient and omnipresent?

Henry. I had certainly not represented the case in this light to myself; and I see clearly, that it is contrary to all our conceptions of the human soul. It is, however, a consoling idea, to think that the saints pray to God for us. God is so exalted a being, that man feels himself separated from Him, as it were, by a wide chasm, which the Holy Virgin and the saints fill up.

Mother. You cannot be in earnest, or you know but little of God. The Psalmist says of him, "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off; for, lo! there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Read the whole 139th Psalm, and learn from it, what folly it is to seek for an inter-

preter of our wishes with the all-present God, who knows our thoughts before they are yet expressed, to seek for an intercessor with Him, who is our gracious and merciful Father! Your reverence of the saints rather separates the hearts of Christians from the true God. He becomes a stranger to them; they accustom themselves to think only on men; God appears to them in the unworthy form of an eastern sovereign, who can only be approached by means of great intercessors and courtiers. Where is here the love, the filial confidence, which the Christian ought to have in God, as his Father? The Roman Catholic prays sooner to the Holy Virgin and the saints than to God. Since you sometimes pray to God, I should wish to know why you do not *always* pray to him, but to the saints? If you believe that he hears prayers at all, and grants them if they are agreeable to his wisdom, you must believe that he *always* hears them, and has the will to attend to them. Consequently, the intercession of the saints is quite superfluous, and, indeed, an insult to God, as if it were necessary that man should first remind him of his mercy, and render him gracious.

Henry. You may be right in this, dear mother, but it cannot be denied that the martyrs and saints deserve that we honour and glorify them.

Father. Yes, but only as pious Christians, not as *mediators between God and man.* We have one Mediator, and that is Christ. We may *honour* the heroes of virtue and the martyrs of faith, preserve their memory, and applaud their courage; but to *pray to them* we ought not.

Henry. But the invocation of saints and martyrs is so ancient in the Church, that it may be traced to the first century.

Father. Hence it follows that the error is old, but still, it is certainly an error, since it is directly contrary to Scripture.

Bernhard. And a still greater error, since it owes

its origin to a notion which ought to have been entirely destroyed by Christianity. The heathen world, before Christ, and the Jews also, believed that the souls of *all* men went, after death, into Tartarus, that is, into a dark abode under the earth; a notion which the early fathers also entertained, and which you will find very expressly stated in Tertullian, if you will read the fifty-fifth and fifty-eighth chapters of his work on the soul. To destroy this notion was the peculiar aim of Christianity, and it, therefore, every where promises us deliverance from death, or Tartarus, and eternal life in *heaven*, or *with God*. But the idea that the souls, after death, leave this world entirely, and go to heaven to God, was so difficult to be conceived by the ancient world, that the notion of a Tartarus was long retained, and admission into heaven, or into the presence of God, was considered an extraordinary, or a most distinguished reward. It was adjudged, as we learn from the earliest fathers, to martyrs alone. It was thought that admission into heaven was granted to them, as to Christ, because they, as Christ, had suffered death. Out of many passages of the ancient fathers, to which I might refer, I will only adduce the words of Tertullian, (concerning the resurrection, chap. xliii.) who says, "No man on leaving the body at death, can immediately (that is, without going to Tartarus) dwell with the Lord, unless it be from the privilege of martyrdom, when he then goes into Paradise, and not into Tartarus," (nemo peregrinatus a corpore statim immoratur penes Dominum, nisi ex martyrii prærogativa; paradiso scilicet, non inferis deversurus.) You may now easily perceive whence the idea, of considering martyrs as intercessors for men, originated, viz. because they, and they alone, together with the angels, were considered as co-inhabitants of heaven, who surrounded the throne of God; and, therefore, (so much was the matter viewed according to human conception) had opportunities of offering petitions to God for the living. With this prevalent, but

erroneous, and unchristian notion, the ancient Church had some grounds to consider the martyrs as intercessors with God; but that this notion should have been extended in later times to the so called saints, there was no ground but, at best, the wish to give to the imagination of the converted heathens, who had been deprived of their gods, some substitute for them, without encroaching too much upon the belief in the unity of the Godhead. The saints and martyrs applied to the Greeks and Romans their demi-gods, or those men whom they considered as demi-gods, because they thought them in heaven, and not in Tartarus.

Henry. If this be the case with the intercession of martyrs, it certainly has sprung from an erroneous conception. But, dear Bernhard, why do you call the saints the "*so called saints.*" Do you not believe that their virtues are genuine, and worthy of imitation?

Bernhard. Of this, as it is too late to-day, we will speak another time.

Father. This I also wish; for, hitherto, Henry, we have heard your accusations against our Church, and an enumeration of the privileges which you ascribe to the Roman Catholic Church. We have defended our own Church, and have examined yours, with the lamp of Scripture and history. It is but just that you should now listen to us, and hear what we have to object against your Church. If you have made your conversion with perfect conviction, you must have reflected upon, and be prepared to answer, the objections which we have to urge against the Roman Catholic Church. We will not be long, since many of the main points have already entered our conversation, and have been dismissed, in the preceding defence.

CHAPTER XVII.

Henry could not oppose this desire of his father. It was just. His parents had listened to him, and it was fit that he should now listen to them, as he had nothing more of consequence to produce. He was obliged to own, that all the arguments by which he had hoped triumphantly to justify himself, had vanished into air. Certainly none of his relations had as yet invited him to return to the Protestant Church; but knowing the decision of his father, he was prepared for such an invitation; and he reflected with pain upon the engagement, into which he had entered with his father, in their first conversation, when they had agreed, that a Church essentially in error ought to be abandoned. In order to receive information upon several points in the constitution of the primitive Church, on which Bernhard had refuted him, he was now reading, with great eagerness, the works of the Apostolical Fathers, Justin and Tertullian. But these gave him a view of the primitive Church, which bore less and less resemblance to the present Roman Church. This course of reading, far from supplying him with arms, for the defence of his Church, sharpened more and more the weapons of his opponents. The state of mind into which he was now fallen, was intolerable to him. He felt that he must come to a decision, but he was, at the same time, convinced that nothing but a return to the truth, which he had left too precipitately, could restore peace and concord within his breast. When he had formed this resolu-

tion, he became more tranquil, and he, therefore, in the evening, appeared tolerably composed to hear what his friends had to produce against the Roman Catholic Church.

"The principal objection which I have to urge against your Church," said his father, "is, that it has introduced great degeneracy of morals, and has stamped a false virtue, which does not deserve the name, with a character of peculiar sanctity. Most of the saints of the middle ages, and of more recent times, attained to the honour of canonization by this false virtue."

Henry. That is, certainly, your opinion also, Bernhard, and therefore you spoke yesterday of the "so called saints." Give me your reasons for this.

Bernhard. I must treat this subject somewhat at large, and, therefore, beg your attention for some time. Before the birth of Christ, already there existed in the East a mode of thinking, according to which the body was regarded as the prison of the soul, and matter as the origin of sin. This opinion of the body, entered into the philosophy of Plato and Pythagoras, and had been imparted, as we learn from Philo of Alexandria, to the Grecising Jews; it had extended through all the countries where Christianity first flourished, and had thus passed over to the first Christian divines. But it unfortunately gave a wrong direction to morality. Men believed, that they could only lead the soul to perfection, render her a fit instrument of the Spirit of God, and worthy of communion with God, if they denied themselves all that was agreeable to the body, all that could excite natural impulses, or advance the enjoyment of physical life; if they used severe means to damp and weaken every feeling of physical life; if they enfeebled the body, that they might thereby afford to the soul a greater freedom for spiritual contemplations. Such self-denial, or *mortification of the flesh*, as it was called, was not unusual, even previous to the days of our Saviour. The austere morals of the first Christians adopted this system,

and carried it still further. The natural impulses, whose gratification awakens physical enjoyment, began to be considered as sinful, and abstinence from these gratifications as meritorious. Attendance at public spectacles, the use of delicate food, every kind of luxury and bodily enjoyment, were considered as incompatible with Christian perfection; on the other hand, fasts, the use of the simplest food, rigid retirement from all public amusements, the voluntary endurance of poverty, celibacy, and the voluntary discharge of humble offices, were considered as highly meritorious, and conferring a peculiar degree of sanctity. Second marriage was, therefore, rejected as a great sign of incontinency; the priests, if they laid any claim to sanctity, lived with their wives as brothers and sisters, and many of the laity did the same. Thus the Roman Church gradually formed her doctrine of *Christian perfection*, or a piety which performs more than the moral law requires, and which, as she maintains, is not commanded by God, because it is not attainable by every man, but which the Apostles have recommended as peculiarly acceptable to God. These are the "*Evangelical Counsels*" of the Roman Church, and the actions proceeding from them are the so called "*good works*." This perfection, as your Church says, consists in celibacy, voluntary poverty, alms-giving, voluntary fasts, prayers, implicit obedience to ecclesiastical superiors, retirement from the world, from its employments and enjoyments, or monastic life, with every kind of voluntary and rigid bodily discipline. Those who were distinguished for this kind of self-denial and self-chastisements, received, by way of pre-eminence, the name of *Saints* *. In later times, this supererogatory virtue was carried to

* Clement of Alexandria says, on this subject, "the Counsels," whether a man is to marry, fill an office, beget children, are of little consequence. The general commandments relating to piety are the main points; to obtain eternal life, it is only necessary to live according to these.

the highest pitch, when numerous orders of mendicant friars arose, who sought a peculiar merit in not doing any work, in seeking support by alms, and in living in the greatest uncleanliness.

Henry. But do you condemn such voluntary self-denials, which often sprang from a profound piety.

Bernhard. I allow that, in many cases, though by far not in all, they originated in a pure religious feeling; but it was evidently a false sanctity which was here aspired after. For it sprang from wrong views of human nature and human life; and, to the great injury of Christianity, it cast into the shade the moral commandments, on which the welfare of man depends. To live in lawful wedlock, faithfully to discharge all the domestic duties, to educate children for the State and for the Church, all this is of no value, according to this standard of perfection; but not to marry, to conduct no household affairs, to have no children,—this is sanctity. To live among men, to labour for them, to carry on an art or a trade, to serve the state and society, avails nothing; but to retire into monasteries, to renounce the world, and to be employed in acts of piety,—this is sanctity. But why should I enlarge upon this point? I will rather, at once, confess my principle to you, by which I must reject your whole system of perfection. What cannot be general, because, if it were so, it would extinguish all civil life, and the whole human race, and, consequently defeat the aim of the Creator, yea, would render the extension of the Church of Christ impossible, this cannot be proper, cannot be perfection; but must be error and fanaticism. You can offer no objection to this principle. But your so called Christian perfection, or the virtues of the saints, would inevitably produce an entire dissolution of Church and State, and is, therefore, destructive fanaticism.

Henry. But the Church does not intend it to become general, because all men are not capable of attaining to this perfection.

Bernhard. Then it is no perfection, no sanctity; and each of these, all men ought to cultivate, according to the precepts of Christ and his Apostles. What would prove folly and destruction, if it were *general*, cannot be virtuous when confined to a *few*. It is, therefore, only something to be tolerated, but not to be admired. The idea of a country, filled with holy monks and nuns alone, instead of with industrious fathers and mothers, will at once present to you the folly of monastic virtue. And do you mean to unite that *blind obedience*, which also forms a part of this perfection, with that morality which commands us absolutely to obey God rather than men? Has not this blind obedience been most scandalously abused in the monastic orders, especially by the Jesuits?

Henry. But the Church could not approve of such an abuse.

Bernhard. But she should not have approved of the principles from which such an abuse proceeded.

Henry. And has she really sanctioned these principles concerning Christian perfection?

Bernhard. How can you ask such a question? Has she not approved of these principles in all the monastic orders? Has she not founded upon them her whole doctrine concerning acts of penance, which the Council of Trent declares as highly necessary? Has she not shewn her approbation of them, by her invocation of the so-called saints? and has she not, by these very principles, endeavoured to justify the celibacy of the priests? But this subject has another very serious point of view, and one that is very destructive to morality. Your Church teaches, that your saints have, by their voluntary good works of Christian perfection, done more than God in general requires of men; that they have manifested a virtue beyond virtue, or *works of supererogation, (opera supererogationis,)* and have, therefore, obtained in the sight of God a merit greater than they themselves require. This supra-merit, you further teach, is left with the

Church, and she possesses, in this superabundant merit of the saints, an inexhaustible treasure, which the Pope has in his custody at Rome. All who lack in obedience to the moral law, and who, instead of merit, have only a debt of sin, can receive from the Pope, out of his treasure, as much merit as is necessary to cancel their debt of sin before God; that is, he can give them *Indulgence*, and the certificate with which he furnishes their wants from this treasure, is called a *Ticket of Indulgence*. How easy has your Church made virtue to man! What need has he to obey the moral law diligently and laboriously, since the multitude of saints has accumulated an *inexhaustible* treasure of merit, which he has only to appropriate to himself, and of which the Church has been always very liberal?

Henry. Bernhard, I cannot believe that this is the case. This would be a real traffic, which would deeply depreciate the value of morality.

Bernhard. Well, now you shall hear the Papal Bull, whereby the late Jubilee, and the distribution of Indulgences, were announced.

"We have determined to avail ourselves of the power, which has been granted to us from above, to open the fountain of those heavenly treasures, which have accumulated by the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the *Blessed Virgin*, his mother, and of the *Saints*, to distribute which we have been empowered by the Creator of men. We present and confer *the grace of the Lord, the forgiveness and perfect absolution of all* their sins, to such Christians as shall, during the Jubilee, confess with true penitence and contrition; as shall strengthen themselves by the Holy Communion, and shall, at least, once a day for thirty days successively, or at intervals, repair to the churches of St. Peter, and St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major, and shall there fervently offer prayers for the *splendour* of the Catholic Church, for the *extirpation*

of heresies, the unity of Catholic princes, the salvation and peace of the Christian people."

Here you see from what sources the Pope distributes; not only from the treasures of the merit of Christ, but also from those of Mary and the Saints; which, we cannot tell why, the Pope represents as accumulated in Rome. You may likewise participate in this treasure, if you will go to Rome, and pray for the extirpation of your native Church.

Henry, (stung). O Bernhard, that was not kind.

Bernhard. Forgive me! It really was not meant for you, but for the Bull of the Pope, which makes such demands of Christians. But you cannot approve of this use of the pretended sanctity of the saints, since it subverts all the principles of morality, and represents that virtue, which is the only virtue, viz. the fulfilment of the moral law, as of secondary importance, and thereby depreciates it.

Henry. I certainly do not approve of this use, and consider it an abuse; but if a man will follow the so-called evangelical counsels, I cannot blame him; and alms-giving, which is contained in them, is very profitable, and a work of Christian mercy.

Father. This is the only one of your good works which confers any benefit upon society, and which, certainly, has produced among you many expellent charitable institutions. But this you cannot deny, that the other virtues of the saints, as celibacy, fasts, and the monastic life, daily prayers of hours' length, blind submission to ecclesiastics, self contempt, self-chastisement, and the like, confer no benefit whatever upon society, and militate against the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." I cannot approve even of your alms-giving; with you the merit consists not in the gift, and the good you do by it, but you place it in this, that a man voluntarily strips himself of his property. You throw to the poor without choice or aim, and thereby make idlers and beggars,

in whom Italy so profusely abounds, that one might imagine, even beggary and idleness belonged to Christian perfection. We do not lay the merit in stripping ourselves of our property, but in assisting. We, therefore, do not support the idle, but the infirm, and those who are unable to labour; and, consequently, what we do,—and certainly to a sufficient extent,—is not injurious, but conducive to the general interests of society.

Bernhard. Your worship of saints has also produced the *worship of relics*, which the Council of Trent has confirmed, and by which, as all the world knows, so much mischief and deception has been practised. The relic-service, together with the pretended miracles connected with it, only cherishes the superstition of the multitude, and tends also to render Christianity itself, as well as its history, a subject of suspicion, if not of contempt, in the eyes of the more enlightened Roman Catholics. I am only surprised that the enlightened part of the Bishops of your Church do not feel, that a relic, performing miracles, is nothing more than the magic charm of a negro in Africa.

Henry. I cannot contradict you, and must confess that I have frequently heard intelligent Roman Catholics express their disapprobation of relic-worship, and light-minded persons even turn it into ridicule.

Father. If you must own that the virtues of saints are incompatible with the spirit of genuine Christianity, you have here a still further proof that the Roman Catholic Church does not answer the chief aim of Christianity, which is to deliver men from the dominion of sin, and to lead them to Christian virtue. This is sufficient for to-day: to-morrow I will direct your attention to some other point of the same kind.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FATHER. It does not become me, as a Protestant, to boast of the morality of Protestants in general as superior to that of the Roman Catholics. You have yourself visited Roman Catholic countries, the very seat and cradle of the Roman Church, you are also acquainted with your native country; decide for yourself. If I judge by travellers, Italy is just the country where domestic and social virtue is least found. Now I do not believe that I require too much when I say that in Rome, where the model and head of Christians resides, where the holy and infallible priesthood rule, not only spiritually but temporally, where the right faith is received direct from the first hand, where the temporal power which the ecclesiastics enjoy does not impede, but rather promotes in every possible manner their influence upon morals; in Rome, where alone judgment is pronounced upon the sanctity or corruption of men, where heretics are condemned, and saints canonized; in Rome, where the vicegerent of Christ resides as a temporal and spiritual monarch, with his apostles, the cardinals; in Rome, more than in any spot of Christendom, Christian morality ought to prevail; there the full influence of Christianity ought to be seen on men, and the Roman Christians ought to be models to the Christian world. Is it so, Henry?—Speak!

Henry. No, certainly, dear father; there is not more but rather less morality found there than in other places.

Father. Then I am perfectly justified in my conclusion, that the true Christian faith, the true *constitution of the Church*, in one word, true Christianity is not to be found there. The cause does not lie in the climate, for ancient Rome produced many illustrious examples of virtue, but it lies herein, that the Pope has fixed himself in the place of Christ, the priesthood with their temporal power and dominion in the place of the Christian Church, and that the whole aim of Catholicism is not to render men acceptable to God and virtuous, but only to make them obedient servants of the priesthood; and, therefore, they have their eternal succession of sacerdotal means of grace, by which men, without one step of amendment, can always be absolved and conveyed to heaven. (I have already, in the beginning of our conversation, spoken upon this point.) And it is on this account that they extol the virtues of saints, that they may thereby crowd convents and monastic orders, and enrich churches and priests. Of this we spoke yesterday: to-day I will suggest for your reflection some things which evidently operate very injuriously upon the morality of the Roman Catholics, and fall as a heavy load upon your Church. The first is the cruelty which she has ever exercised against those who have thought differently from herself, the persecutions which she has excited in all ages against such as would not acknowledge the omnipotence of the priesthood; that monster, the inquisition, which has sprung from her bosom, and which the popes have encouraged and fostered; the millions of bloody victims which your priests have sacrificed for the preservation of their dominion; and their still unrelenting and unchristian condemnation and cursing of all Christian Protestants.

Henry. I cannot deny that the Popes of earlier times have deeply stained themselves and the Church with blood-guiltiness; but I believe, however, that a milder spirit now reigns in Rome, and that we have receded from the cruelties of the middle ages.

Father. Groundless deception! practised by the proselyte makers, to remove from the minds of such as they wish to gain their horror at the cruelties of the Roman Catholic Church. Did not the late Pope, Pius the Seventh, solemnly protest, at the congress of Vienna, against the Protestants enjoying equal rights with the Roman Catholics? And did not the same Pope write, in a circular of the 30th Nov. 1808, to all foreign Roman Catholic courts, "It is as false as it is *slanderous* that the Concordat (with France, of 1801,) has confirmed a toleration to other modes of worship. This concordat does not contain a single word which has reference to any mode of worship *condemned and prohibited* by the Roman Church." This mode of worship, condemned by Rome, was that of the Reformed Church in France. The same Pope wrote in May, 1808, to the French clergy thus:—"The indifference (of the French code of laws) which gives *preference* to no religion (confession) is an *outrage* against the Roman Church, and opposed to her spirit; since this Church, on account of her divine origin and necessary unity, cannot connect herself with *another* Church." If, therefore, the Roman Catholic Church continues, even to this hour, to condemn us as heretics, and does not acknowledge our Church, you must own that she does not want the *will* but the *power* to act against us in the spirit of the middle ages. But is not this example of unrelenting hatred and unabating intolerance in direct contradiction to the spirit of the Gospel? which commands us to love such as entertain different sentiments from ourselves, yea, our very enemies, and every where recommends mercy and gentleness.

Henry. I must acknowledge this, and I do believe that it would fare ill with the peace of the world if Roman Catholic princes and nations were to appropriate to themselves the feelings of hatred and persecution which have been incessantly fulminated from Rome.

Father. The priesthood of your Church have had a baneful influence upon the morals of their flocks, since they have taken *immoral principles publicly under their protection.* I will not again mention the system of indulgences, since we are agreed upon its immoral effects; but how often have your Popes of earlier and more recent times solemnly declared the *oaths* of Christians invalid, and thereby undermined in the hearts of men the sanctity of an oath, and reverence for God? And have they not established the principle, that it is not necessary to observe any fidelity, any faith towards heretics? But all this would be comparatively of little consequence if the Roman Catholic Church had not produced, recognised, and fostered the *Jesuits*, yea, had not now again restored them. The immorality of the Jesuits is become a proverb in Europe: they maintained the flagitious principle that the end sanctifies all, even the very worst means, and that, therefore, insurrections, regicide, perjury, falsehood, and every kind of wickedness are justifiable for the honour of God; they established the scandalous doctrine of the so called probability, by which a wicked action is permitted, if a man can only, with probability, expect good consequences from it; they taught the mental reservation in oaths and promises; they taught that an immoral action is not sinful if a man only at the same time think upon God: in a word, they were such reprobates, and were found so dangerous, that the general cry of the Roman Catholic courts forced the extinction of the order. According to some computations sixty-eight Jesuistical writers are said to have inculcated regicide.

Henry. But the Roman Catholic Church has not approved of these detestable doctrines.

Father. No, that she has not done, as her desire for the extinction of the order proves: but the Popes were silent at these doctrines; they protected the order against the princes as long as possible; they have again restored it; they foster and recommend it

every where. And what is done by your infallible Pope, the inspired head of the inspired priesthood, to which the Jesuits themselves belong, is chargeable upon your whole Church, which acknowledges the Pope as the general father of Christendom. If a sovereign were to receive anew into office and into honour a statesman of corrupt principles, whom he had previously been obliged to dismiss for want of integrity, would it not be concluded that he approved of his principles and conduct?

Henry. It is certainly wrong to restore an order which the moral voice of the Roman Catholic world condemned, without any investigation, without receiving a pledge from it that it has renounced its former notorious errors and false principles, or a proof that it is now reformed.

Father. The Pope cannot indeed be separated from the Roman Catholic Church, since its members are so closely united with him that they scarcely acknowledge him as a Christian who does not submit to him. And all bishops and clergy of the Catholic communion are obliged, at their ordinations, to swear *true obedience (veram obedientiam)* to the Pope. But now observe, Henry, how the Popes have ever maintained principles which are directly contrary to the Gospel, and have thereby led Roman Catholic Christians to disobey the precepts of Jesus and his Apostles; they have ever maintained, and caused it to be maintained by their bishops, that Protestant Christians are damned because they believe no more than the Gospel contains, and wish to know nothing of peculiar doctrines which have been received later by the Roman Catholic Church; and you have seen, from the precepts of Christ, and his Apostles, introduced in our preceding conversation, that these every where declare simply faith in God and Christ, as sufficient for salvation, and make our eternal welfare *chiefly* dependent upon a Christian life. The Popes further give the pernicious example, that, although they

are the followers of Christ and his Apostles, and derive all their power from them, they still establish doctrines and customs against the express appointment of Jesus and his Apostles; they, therefore, give the example of conscious and wilful disobedience. Jesus gave the cup at the communion, the Apostles and the whole Apostolical Church did the same, but the Popes and bishops deny the cup to the laity. St. Paul (1 Tim. iii. 2. 12. Tit. i. 6.) writes, that a bishop should be the husband of *one* wife; but the Pope and his bishops have established as a law that a bishop should be the husband of *no* wife. Again, (1 Tim. iv. 3.) he blames those who forbid to marry, and who command to abstain from meats; and ver. 8. establishes the just principle, "For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." But the Popes and their bishops forbid the priests to marry, declare celibacy a more blessed state, and teach that man, by fastings and other bodily exercises, may avert divine punishment, and make atonement for his sins.

Henry. I scarcely believe, dear father, that our Church has at any time declared celibacy a more blessed state than marriage. How could she otherwise honour marriage as a sacrament?

Father. The tenth canon of the twenty-fourth session of the Council of Trent runs thus: "If any man say that the married state is preferable to a single one, and that it is not *better* and *more blessed* to remain in the single state and in celibacy than to marry, let him be cursed." There is here no prohibition of marriage, but it is declared as something not good, as a kind of necessary evil; and it is maintained, that to remain single is more blessed, *(beatius,)* that is, leads more certainly to salvation. Here your Church stands in direct contradiction to the Apostle, who says, that a bishop should be "the husband of one wife," and who blames those that forbid to marry, and who (1 Tim.

ii. 15.) says of the married women: "Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety." Finally, it is a contradiction to the appointment of God, from the beginning, who (Gen. ii. 18.) at the creation of the woman said, "It is not good for man to be alone," while you teach that it is *better* and *more blessed* for him to be alone. You accuse God of having instituted a state which is not good and blessed, since he, by creating the two sexes, and giving the commandment, "Be ye fruitful, and multiply," has rendered marriage necessary. While the whole Old Testament declares children a blessing from God, you condemn the legitimate union of the two sexes, on which depends the propagation of the human race, and consider it not so good and blessed a state as celibacy.

Mother. And how much does the Roman Catholic Church thereby degrade the one half of the human race! Does she not consider woman as a kind of evil, and as seducers to a less perfect and blessed state? Does she not thereby pronounce a sentence of disapprobation upon the high and noble duties of the mother and housewife? Oh, it is indeed more difficult to bear the weight of domestic duties, to discharge the maternal offices, with the sacrifice of health, and at the risk of life, and to educate well-principled children, with care and diligence, for society and the Church of God, than to sit idly in a convent and sing psalms.

Wilhelmina. And, if it be true, that both sexes have their particular characters assigned them by nature; that the single and separate life of each of them forms only a partial character, but that the true human character is moulded by both sexes living together in a domestic and married state, and imparting to each other their natural perfections; on this supposition, the decree of your unmarried Bishops at Trent, is still more unreasonable and contradictory to the design of the Creator. What could your Bishops, not

one of whom ever had a wife, understand of marriage, and the character of the female sex! It is bad and unjust enough, that men alone, without hearing women, make all the laws of the married state; but it is ten times worse, when the legislators on this subject, are, by office, unmarried.

Henry. Do you know, Wilhelmina, that the Apostle, (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) says, "Let your women keep silence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

Bernhard. This refers only to the expounding of doctrines in the Church, which certainly is not congenial with the reserve and modesty of the fair sex, and for which, besides, the gentle female voice is not adapted. But if matrimonial or domestic laws, or any other regulations, which peculiarly refer to the department of women, be enacted, it certainly is but just, that the voices of intelligent women should be heard.

Henry. Although your remarks upon the praise which our Church bestows on celibacy, are true, I must, however, observe, that the doctrine of the Council of Trent is supported by the precepts of St. Paul, who (1 Cor. vii. 1. 8, 9.) writes, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman:—I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I; but if they cannot contain, let them marry."

Bernhard. I know this passage well, but it is nothing to the purpose. For why did St. Paul at that time counsel against marriage? Not because it is *better* and *more blessed* in itself to remain single; not because an easier way to Christian perfection is thereby obtained, as you teach; but because he expected the occurrence of troublesome times, when persecutions could be borne more easily in the single state, than if a man had the charge of wife and children. This the Apostle explains in ver. 26. "I therefore suppose, *that this is good for the present distress*," viz. that a man remain unmarried. The Apos-

tle certainly, as the primitive Church in general, believed the second advent of Christ to be very nigh at hand; and, consequently, the occurrence of the distresses and terrors which Jesus (St. Matt. xxiv.) had predicted, as preceding his advent. On this account the Apostle considered it *advisable* (not more blessed) to remain single. But since those apprehensions were ungrounded, there is no obligation whatever upon modern Christians to follow this well-meant advice.

Henry. But you derogate from the authority of the Apostles, if you believe that they were mistaken concerning the time of the second advent of Christ.

Bernhard. By no means—for Jesus had repeatedly told them, that they should receive no revelation on this point, but should, as all other Christians, be left to their own conjectures. For after Jesus (Matt. xxiv.) had spoken of his second advent, he added, ver. 36. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." And when, as we learn from Acts i. 6. the Apostles asked him if he should, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel, they were answered, ver. 7. that "it was not for them to know the times or the seasons which the Father had put into his own power."

Father. You see, therefore, Henry, that the Popes and bishops have decided concerning marriage in a manner which is contrary to the doctrines of the Scriptures. And now do not the principles and actions of your Priesthood, with regard to *sovereigns* and *princes*, militate against the evangelical precepts? St. Paul, (Rom. xiii. 1.) writes, "Let every one be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." And, (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.) "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." And St. Peter, (1 Pet. ii. 13. 17.) writes, "Subject yourselves to

every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors.—Fear God; honour the king!" This is the language of the holy Apostle. But how has the pretended successor of St. Peter acted? He has absolved the subjects of the emperor of Germany, of the kings of France, of England, of Naples, from their oaths of allegiance; instituted and deposed emperors and kings; given away kingdoms; and maintained, that he was authorized to give and receive crowns.

Henry. But this was only in the darkness of the middle ages.

Father. Now hear what the Pope, as late as April 16th, 1701, wrote to the king of France and other Roman Catholic Princes, on occasion of the elector of Brandenburg, Frederic the Third, assuming the dignity of king of Prussia. "Beloved son in Christ! although we certainly believe, that thy majesty will, in no wise, approve of the enterprise which Frederic, the elector of Brandenburg, has undertaken, as a *most disgraceful* (deterrimo) example to *Christendom;* that he should presume to arrogate to himself openly the regal title; we cannot, however, on this occasion, be silent, because such an action is contrary to the *contents* of the *Papal sanctions* (Apostolicarum sanctionum dispositioni) and *injurious* (injuriosum) to the authority of the sacred chair, since the sacred title cannot be assumed by a Non-Catholic, without contempt for the Church." But the higher powers, for whom St. Paul and St. Peter command us to pray, and to whom they enjoin us to submit, were even heathens, viz. the Roman emperors, their governors, and magistrates. But the Pope does not *honour* even Christian kings, and will be the ruler, not only of Roman Catholic, but also of Protestant Princes. The pious Apostles wished Christians to pray for heathen emperors and magistrates; the present Pope Leo, in his Bull concerning the Jubilee, exhorts the faithful to pray for "*Catholic,*" and, consequently, not for Pro-

testant Princes, and also for the "*extirpation of heresy.*" The contradiction goes still further. St. Paul (Rom. xiii. 6, 7.) commands the Christians at Rome to pay, without murmur, the taxes imposed by heathen magistrates; but the Pope maintains, that no princes dare impose taxes upon their subjects, without his approbation.

Henry. What Pope has arrogated to himself such an unheard-of claim?

Father. Urban the Eighth, who, in the year 1627, issued the celebrated Holy Thursday Bull, with seventeen curses, which is recited every Holy Thursday in St. Peter's Church in Rome, where it is said literally, "Moreover, we put under ban and curse, all who, in their own countries, impose or add new taxes or duties, or require that they should be imposed or increased, except in such cases as it is permitted them by right, or by the *especial permission* of the *Apostolical chair.*" Confess that your Popes have, by all this, raised themselves above Christ and his Apostles, and require more obedience to themselves than to them, whose substitutes and successors they pretend to be. And yet Christ says, (St. Matt. x. 24.) "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." The reason why they will also not allow the laity to read the Holy Scriptures in their native tongue, is not so much because they believe that they can receive any injury from the Word of God, as because they fear that they will discover in it much that is very different from the decisions of the Popes and bishops.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was Sunday, and the whole of the family went, as usual, to the parish Church, where the sacrament was administered to a large number of communicants. Antonio was also present, and paid the utmost attention to the whole ceremony. When the family met after Church in the garden, Henry's mother, who began to feel much interest in the young Neapolitan, asked him if he had been pleased with the Protestant communion service. Antonio said that he had found it very impressive and edifying; he had been particularly pleased that the communion service was not, as with the Roman Catholics, performed in the Latin tongue, and that the cup was also administered.

"But how does it happen, Henry," inquired his mother, "that the Roman Church denies the *cup* to the laity? This appears to me to have no foundation whatever."

Henry. The Council of Trent, in the twenty-first session, says on this point,—"The partaking of one of the elements is, without doubt, sufficient for salvation; for although Christ has instituted the sacrament in the form of bread and wine, still this institution does not require that all believing Christians are bound to partake of both elements *."

Mother. I should be glad to know why not. If the words of our Saviour, "*take and eat*," institute the bread, the words "*drink ye all of this*" must, with equal justice, institute the participation of the cup. If

* See Testimonies of the Fathers, Appendix XII.

all Christians are bound to partake of the former, I do not conceive why the latter is not *equally requisite for all*. The primitive Church partook of bread and wine, as the explicit passage in 1 Cor. xi. shews.

Henry. That the council acknowledges when it says—"The partaking of both elements was certainly common in the commencement of Christianity, but this custom has, in the course of time, been every where changed."

Antonio. But it does not follow from thence that the new custom is right and just, and that it ought to be established as a law: it is sinning against the express words of Jesus, "drink ye all of this."

Father. Neither is the observation which the council makes on this custom a true one; it was introduced in England only in the twelfth century; wherefore the Greek Church which separated already in the eleventh century from the Latin Church, continues to administer the wine. It was founded on the opinion started only in the ninth century, that the bread and wine were transformed into the body and blood of Christ. But from the apprehension lest the laity might spill a drop of the Lord's blood, or wipe it from their mouths, the cup, owing to this superstitious fear, was gradually entirely withdrawn from them.

Henry. The Roman Catechism alleges still other reasons, namely, that the wine would turn sour if it were presented like the host.

Father. This is built on the same opinion; for why do you preserve the wine? Because you believe it to be no more wine, but the blood of the Lord. But by becoming sour it proves itself to be still wine.

Henry. The Catechism further says—"There are likewise many who cannot endure the taste, yea, not even the smell of wine, and in some countries there is very little wine, and it is very difficult and expensive to procure it.

Father. Groundless reasons! Among a million of men there is scarcely one who has an antipathy to

wine: why should all be deprived of it? Are we to abolish preaching because some among the congregation may be deaf? I have never heard of a man in this country who had a natural disgust for wine. If it be difficult to procure wine in some cold countries, it should still not be prohibited in warm climates. But the small quantity required at the communion can be procured in all countries. This at most could only justify an exception to the rule, but ought never to form a rule.

Antonio. Eating and drinking belong together, and both support life; as the communion is a type of heavenly food, or of grace, both ought to be given to man, as Jesus gave not only bread to eat but also wine to drink: half a sacrament is no better than none at all.

Henry. The Roman Catechism alleges still another reason, namely, the doctrine of concomitance, which the Council of Trent has also established in the thirteenth session, namely, that the blood of Christ is also contained in his body, and that, therefore, those who partake of the bread partake at the same time of the blood of Christ.

Father. I am aware of this invention of the school divines, but I cannot dwell upon it without feeling a certain disgust. The idea of the bloody flesh of Christ is to me in the highest degree gross, repugnant, and conveying the most unpleasant associations.

Mother. But it cannot be meant in that sense, my dear.

Henry. Certainly! for the Roman Catechism declares, in unequivocal terms, that it is an heretical error to maintain that the bread contains only the *bloodless body (exsangue corpus)* of the Lord.

Mother. Well, then I must confess that I can form no conception of what is called the bloody body of the Lord. I am aware that newly killed flesh is bloody, but to apply this to the glorified body of Christ appears to me the most extraordinary incon-

sistency. St. Paul directly contradicts this gross conception; he describes the bodies of the dead who are arisen, and the body of Christ since his resurrection, very differently, 1 Cor. xv. 42. &c. he says "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption, (therefore, not consisting of flesh and blood;) it is sown a natural body (of flesh and blood,) it is raised a *spiritual* body. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither does corruption inherit incorruption." And Philippians iii. 21. he says, "Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

Antonio. As for me, it is sufficient that Jesus took the cup and said, "drink ye all of this." The Saviour must have been as well aware of the learned sophism, that the blood is in the flesh, as the bishops of Trent, and if it had been applicable to the case, he might have dispensed with the distribution of the cup. The inference would be that the cup need not be taken at all, and that the priests also ought by no means to drink of it.

Father. Antonio is quite right. In that case we might also baptize in the name of God alone, and not according to the commands of Jesus, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; because, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, the Son and the Holy Ghost are in the Father.

Henry. I must grant to you that no tenable grounds can be found for the withdrawal of the cup. But still the Protestant Church has been wrong in abolishing *extreme unction*, as this sacrament was undoubtedly ordained by the Apostle James.

Father. Let us read the passage in connexion; James v. 13—16. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray; is any merry? let him sing Psalms; is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him

up; and if any have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed! The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." You see that the Apostle gives rules which refer to three different cases, the one of affliction, the other of rejoicing, and the third of sickness. You cannot, therefore, say that the third rule is the institution of a sacrament, unless you admit that prayer under affliction, and singing Psalms in times of rejoicing, are likewise sacraments. The two first rules none have ever interpreted as institutions of sacraments, consequently not the third either. But what the Apostle advises here is not your extreme unction. You have it administered by *one*, and that one a *priest*, but the Apostle speaks of *elders*, and not of *the elder*; he, therefore, did not consider it as a pastoral office, wherefore he says at the conclusion, *pray one for another*, confess your faults *one to another*. Consequently he excludes none, but speaks of what all should reciprocally do, not of what belongs to the priest: but he ascribes no peculiar virtue to the anointing with oil. We see from Mark vi. 13. where it is said, "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and *healed* them," that anointing with oil was a medicinal application, which is to this day administered in the east in cases of pestilence. You, on the contrary, teach that the oil as a sacrament, and, as consecrated by the Bishop, possesses the power to ward off Satan from the departing soul, and to turn the mercy of God towards it. St. James probably only mentions the oil as a customary application, and, on the contrary, tacitly refutes the opinion of the oil possessing a peculiar virtue when he says "*that prayer* shall save the sick, because it availeth much." He makes no remark upon the oil, but points out prayer as the main point, that Christians might not think that any thing depends upon the use of the oil. If, therefore, the Protestant

Christian, during sickness, sends for pious friends, or his pastor, to visit him, and pray for him, he conforms to the regulation of the Apostle, who makes this regulation not in order to institute a *sacrament for the dying*, but in order to restore *the sick to health*. The Greek Church makes use of unction solely for the latter purpose.

Antonio. I am at least convinced that my Saviour will not cast me from him if I die without having received extreme unction from a priest, provided I have performed what he requires of those who shall inherit eternal life, namely, provided I have kept his commandments. With the true Christian his whole life must represent extreme unction.

Father. You are right, Antonio! Adhere to this, and continue ever diligent in Christian virtue, then you need not fear that a priest can close heaven against you; nor do you require him to open it for you: priests and laymen are equally subject to the judgment of the Lord, and both stand in need of his mercy.

Antonio. I am happy to find that you think exactly as I do, and this encourages me to make a request, and to put a question to you, namely, if I may be allowed to partake of the communion with the congregation here, and whether your minister will admit me as a Roman Catholic.

Father. Antonio, you appear to me a young man of so much sense, that I cannot consider the question, with which you surprise me, as proceeding from want of reflection; I must, therefore, tell you, that you cannot partake with us of the Communion, if you still consider us as condemned heretics, and not as your Christian brethren; because, the table of the Lord is a table of brotherly love, and those who approach it, must regard one another as brethren.

Antonio. If this be the condition, I can join you in the Communion with a good conscience. I am no longer a Roman Catholic, but a Protestant Christian; I acknowledge the Christians of this country as my

true brethren, and I will henceforth adhere to them. —Do not look at me with so much astonishment! I am perfectly in earnest, and this is my well weighed determination.

Father. But, my dear Antonio, who has taught and instructed you?

Antonio. Here—this book! the Gospel, or rather, the precepts of Jesus, and the Epistles of the Apostles. To these alone will I henceforth listen, for they alone are the original teachers of Christianity. Let the Pope enjoy his dignities, but I can no more regard him as the Vicegerent of Christ, nor as the supreme Bishop of Christendom, and I can only believe him and the Bishops, as far as their doctrines agree with this sacred volume, not when they contradict it.

Father. If that is your real conviction, then you have adopted the grand principle to which we adhere, in opposition to the Roman Church, and are, therefore, so far a Protestant Christian. But, Antonio, have you weighed every part of the subject? Oh! do not act rashly; it is dangerous to be precipitate in so important a point. I will not dissuade you from taking a decisive step, but far be it from me to endeavour to persuade you. Your own heart must urge you,—you must be guided by conviction; for you are responsible to no one.

Antonio. I have weighed all. I am not influenced by worldly expectations, nor by interest; my faith, my own heart, urge me to this step. Oh! if you knew how different the state of my mind is now, from what it was formerly! Then it was full of anxiety, fear, and care; now it is all contentment, joy, and confidence!

Mother. I believe you, Antonio! you do not deceive us!—Give him permission, my love!

Father. I have, in this case, nothing either to permit or to prohibit; but I can give my advice, and the more so, as Antonio has no other friends here than us, and as he is a stranger in this country. Consider,

Antonio, that as a Roman Catholic, you may calculate upon considerable support from your brethren in the faith, which you will lose when you join us.

Antonio. I have considered this, and I do not desire to obtain promotion on such grounds, nor to be, perhaps, advanced in preference to native Germans of merit.

Father. If this is your serious determination, it is necessary, however, that you take one step: you must apply to some clergyman of this town, and must suffer yourself to be examined and instructed, so far as will be required.

Antonio. I feel that this is proper, although it is not necessary, and I am ready to undergo an examination. But have the goodness to mention the subject to the clergyman, that he may know what my wishes are, when I go to him.

Father. That I will do; but afterwards you must yourself visit him, and announce your determination to him.

CHAPTER XX.

'N the evening of this day, the conversation referred xclusively to Antonio. Henry's mother was much leased with the intimate knowledge which he had cquired of the New Testament, his father commended he young man's clear understanding and just discri- ination, Wilhelmina, his good disposition, and Henry, his punctuality, his fidelity, and his uprightness. Henry related the conversations which he had had vith Antonio upon his religious doubts, which served still more to convince his Father, that the silent efficacy of divine truth alone had purified his mind from the false views instilled into him in his youth; and he testingly declared, that, after this example, he could no more blame the Pope for prohibiting the laity from reading the Bible.

But this change of disposition in Antonio was so applicable to Henry, that his friends could not avoid alluding to it. Wilhelmina, with youthful candour, had already often invited him to forget all Catholicism, and to return, without further delay, to the Protestant Church. A formal recantation appeared to her not at all necessary. Henry would willingly have agreed to this, if his conversion to the Roman Church had been still as concealed as he had, at first, flattered himself. Although his family had been perfectly silent upon the subject, the case had yet become known, they knew not how. Yea, the day when Henry had deposited his Roman Catholic confession, and all the particulars attending it, were publicly mentioned. A Ro-

man Catholic physician, who called himself Frederic, had lately settled in the town, where he enjoyed high esteem, as he was a man of sense, and of polished manners, and paid remarkable attention to the poor, from whom he not only refused all fees, but supplied them with medicine gratis. Only a few days ago he had accosted Henry in a public assembly, as his brother in the faith; and painful as this salutation was to him, he had still been obliged publicly to acknowledge himself a Roman Catholic. At the same time, the doctor, although under the cover of secresy, informed him, that his change of creed was known at D——, and that it was only expected that he would make application for patronage there, which he would be secure of obtaining. Under these circumstances, it appeared to him that a private recantation, as if nothing had happened, would only become a subject of still greater notoriety.

His affectionate mother had viewed the subject in a different light. She could not refrain from intimating to her son, how happy he would render her, if he would repair the precipitate step he had taken. Ah! how readily he would have met her wishes, if he could have done so without publicity and disgrace. For he was obliged to confess to himself, that in his creed he was no more a Roman Catholic, that all his arrows had been blunted against the Protestant Church, and that his justification of his secession had completely failed with his parents.

His father alone had hitherto been perfectly silent. But this very silence was as ominous to his son, as the calm which precedes a thunder-storm. He knew the firm and decisive character of his father;—and he was not mistaken. For after his father had questioned him in the evening, whether he could still produce reasonable grounds in justification of his secession to the Roman Catholic Church, and Henry had answered in the negative, he at once insisted that he should now atone for his precipitancy, and return to the Protestant

Church.—"You have," he said, "yourself acknowledged, and have been obliged to confess, that all the advantages which you had ascribed to the Roman Catholic Church, and by which you wished to justify your secession, are either enjoyed also by our Church, or are entirely unfounded; and that, on the contrary, the objections which you made to our Church, were without foundation. And, above all, you have been obliged to allow, that the Protestant Church serves the end of Christianity in an eminent degree, while this is not the case with the Roman Church; you have yourself maintained and approved the principle, that, under such circumstances, a man is bound to renounce his Church, and to join the Church which fulfils the aim of Christ's mission.—You have," continued he, with an elevated voice,—"you have given me your hand as a pledge, that you would discharge this duty, and I now require the performance of your promise."

Henry. But, dearest father, what a sensation will not such a step excite! In what a disadvantageous light I shall appear! I shall be thought fickle and inconsistent; it will be believed that I have become a Roman Catholic from interested motives. The Catholics will hate me; the Protestants will distrust me,—perhaps, despise me!—Oh, Father, absolve me from my engagement!

Father. See how conscientiously you deal with the opinion of the world!—But you did not consider, when you abandoned your Church, that you would afflict your parents, lose their affection, give offence to your countrymen,—who would regard you with distrust, contempt, or, the more charitable among them, with pity. There, where error was concerned, all this was indifferent to you; here, where truth is at stake, you at once play the part of one tenderly concerned for the opinion of the world! Beware, Henry! It is still time, either to gain the esteem and affection of your friends, or to forfeit them for ever!

Mother. Speak in more gentle terms to your son,

my dearest love. Consider, that when he took that precipitate step, he was far from us, far from every faithful friend. If he had here, in the bosom of his family, become an apostate from the truth, then your severity would have been well-founded.

Wilhelmina. Besides, it was not the fault of his heart, but of his judgment. If, previous to Henry's departure for Italy, we had joined in such conversations as we have now held, he would certainly have remained faithful to our Church. And I think, my dearest father, that you should have done this, as you must have expected, that your son would have been attacked by proselyte-makers.

Father, (very gravely). I acknowledge the error I have committed, and I have endeavoured to repair it by my utmost exertions. But *he* is aware of his error, and is determined to persevere in it,—persevere in it from vanity, for the sake of the false opinion of a few, although his conscience must urge him to perform what I require of him! And if I have been in the wrong, not to warn him, when he went to Rome, he is doubly culpable, to have become a Roman Catholic without taking the advice of intelligent persons. He has acted here like great men, who suffer themselves to be made Catholics, because they think it beneath their dignity to consult a sensible Protestant minister, who would soon dispel the mist which proselyte-makers have raised before their eyes.

Mother. But do you think, my dear, that it is right to use compulsion in matters of faith and duty?

Father. How can you make such a question? Children only are governed with the rod; persons arrived at years of discretion ought to govern themselves. But what is that to the purpose?

Mother. And do you not use compulsion towards your son when you let him feel your displeasure, and when you urge him with so much violence, and work so powerfully upon his filial affection? My dearest love, what you demand I wish just as ardently as you,

and it will greatly enhance the happiness of my life if Henry will comply with my wishes: but his determination can only be valuable to us if it be voluntary in him.

Father. There I agree with you: but the question here is not to determine him upon any point, the moral necessity of which is doubtful to him, but only to conquer a weakness, which prevents him from following the dictates of his conscience.

Henry. But there are certainly, dearest father, many excellent Roman Catholics who do not believe all that the Church has decreed, but are perfectly Protestant in their persuasion, and who still continue within the pale of their Church. Will you on that account condemn them?

Father. That is quite a different case. We can excuse a Catholic who lives in a country where the Protestant faith is forbidden as heretical, or barely tolerated, if he does not separate from his Church. For here important duties connected with his civil welfare and the happiness of his family arise, to which he must pay regard; besides, I have before remarked to you, that a few errors and abuses which a man may observe in his Church do not justify him to quit it, but that he ought only then to renounce it, when he is convinced that the Church to which he belongs does not serve the end of Christianity in delivering men from the dominion of sin. In countries like Italy, Spain, and Portugal, a Catholic will not easily form such an opinion concerning his Church; but if such were the case he would truly be bound in conscience to withdraw from his Church: but a Catholic who resides in a country where the Protestant Church is lawfully established, and who is convinced that the Roman Catholic Church does not serve the aim of Christianity, but that the Protestant Church fulfils that aim, him I absolutely consider bound in conscience publicly to attest the acknowledged truth, and to join a Church which does not serve the kingdom of

the world, but the kingdom of God. In this case you stand, and the obligation, as an apostate from the true Church, weighs doubly on you.

Henry. I have only one question—be not angry dearest father!—suffer me to put only one question to you. Do you not think that I, as a Roman Catholic can be just as good a Christian as I could be if I again joined your Church? Must you not allow that there are good and bad Christians among all Christian persuasions, and that, therefore, the object of the Gospel can be attained even with an erroneous creed?

Father. Upon this point I have, in fact, answered you already in our first conversation, when I proved to you that it is incumbent upon us to quit a Church under given circumstances: but I will add a few remarks. I by no means deny that there may be in your Church many excellent men and very good Christians. But this is no reason for maintaining that we may, with equal facility, in every Church become good Christians, and that it is therefore unnecessary to join the better Church. What would you say if the Greeks and Romans, at the time of the promulgation of Christianity, had expressed themselves thus: "there have been among us Heathens many excellent men, a Socrates, a Plato, and others; there can, therefore, exist good men who fear the Deity, and do justice also in idolatry; we will, therefore, continue in it." Or do you consider schools as superfluous because among all nations, even where no institutions for education existed, men distinguished for learning and acquirements have arisen? We must never rest satisfied because we can make occasional exceptions, because we may avoid the influence of erroneous conceptions, or of customs injurious to morality, or may dispense with the influence of truth. You would certainly not approve of a man who would join the society of persons who were full of prejudices, and abandoned themselves to dangerous pleasures, in the hope of preserving himself from the influence of such

society. In the same manner you cannot say that you will guard yourself against the pernicious influence which the doctrines of your Church concerning the priesthood, remission of sins, indulgences, penances, blind faith, condemnation of heretics, may have upon your mind. And even if this were in your power, you would still be deprived of all the incitements to obtain the knowledge of truth and of your duties, which the Protestant sermon, the free access to Scripture, and the Protestant service afford you. According to my conviction, a man may with greater ease and more security become a good Christian in the pale of the Protestant Church than out of it, and we may become better Christians in her community than we could otherwise have been; it is, therefore, our duty to avail ourselves of such assistance, not to reject it.

Mother. You must consider too, my dearest Henry, that your Saviour expressly requires of you to acknowledge his Gospel, and that you cannot neglect the word of God without offending God. If all men had thought like you, that a man might still be a good man whatever faith he might profess, your Saviour would have outwardly conformed with the customs of the Pharisees, the Apostles would have continued Jews, the Fathers of the Church have remained Heathens, and there would not have been any witnesses to truth in the Christian Church.

Wilhelmina. I believe, my dear brother, that I can elucidate the whole case to you by a simile, which may be permitted to a girl who is betrothed. If I had to choose between two men, and I had reason to believe that one of them, from his character and his cultivation of mind, would mould me into a good wife, while the other, from his narrow views and imperfections, threatened to make me a perverse woman, I should certainly be much to be blamed if I were to reject the former and choose the latter, and flattered myself that I should be strong enough to withstand the pernicious influence of daily intercourse and the

most intimate connexion. So you, my dear brother, stand between two churches, one of which you must choose for the partner of your life. But still it is usual and just to give time to consider so important a choice, and I should think, father, that we ought also to grant Henry time to reflect upon the determination he will form.

This proposal of Wilhelmina was approved by all parties, and it was agreed that the subject should not be mentioned again till eight or ten weeks had elapsed.

CHAPTER XXI.

While Henry was wavering, Antonio advanced with hasty steps in the course which he had entered; he had informed the parish minister of his intention to join the Protestant Church. The clergyman strictly examined him concerning the motives of this step, for he feared that it might spring from some impure source. The open character of Antonio, his pious disposition, his peculiar situation, by which the recommendations which he had brought with him as a Roman Catholic, became useless to him, soon convinced him that the Protestant Church would in Antonio acquire a sincere and estimable member. When he had discovered this he declared his approbation of Antonio's determination, and he gladly undertook the task of instructing him; but to his astonishment he found that little remained to be done here: the young proselyte was so well versed in the New Testament, and had acquired so sound a knowledge of the essential parts of Christianity, founded on the precepts of Jesus and the Apostles, that the minister had nothing to offer in addition. He might certainly have added some points of the established creeds of the Protestant Church, but he did not do so because he thought that the Gospel of Jesus ought to form the creed of a Christian. He explained and rectified only what here and there remained obscure and indistinct in Antonio's knowledge, and made him acquainted with the Old Testament, the history of the Christian Church, and the Reformation, to which the young man was

still a stranger. After a lapse of eight weeks he declared Antonio already fully competent to be received into the community of the Church.

The day on which this was to take place had been already fixed, when the change of clime shewed its effects on Antonio's constitution; a cold brought on a fever, which soon assumed a dangerous appearance, and threatened his life. The whole family was deeply concerned for him, and Henry in particular felt the warmest sympathy for his faithful companion; he never left him, and watched his pillow with the most anxious care: but nothing could stop the violence of the disease, which had turned into a nervous fever. Antonio himself was aware of his situation, and was prepared to meet his end.

"My dear friend, I am dying," he said with a feeble but calm voice to Henry, who was watching at his side during one of his worst nights, "I die willingly and contented, for what happiness can life offer to me! I only regret that I have not, before my death, been able publicly to acknowledge the Gospel, and to give due honour in the eyes of men to the words of my Saviour."

Henry. Compose yourself, Antonio; God will still grant you life to execute your determination.

Antonio. Be it, or be it not, God's will be done! Ah! I thank him from my inmost soul that he has thought me worthy to discern the truth. How miserable should I formerly have felt on my death-bed! I should have trembled at the thoughts of purgatory; I should have agitated myself with a tormenting confession; I should have been anxious respecting the power of the priestly absolution; should have felt myself separated from God by the intermediate person of the priest. Oh! how blessed I am in the conviction that my soul is not in the mortal hands of the priest, that it does not need the intercession of the saints, but is in the hand of God and my Redeemer! I have done, at least according to my best endea-

yours, what I have been commanded, and thus I am certain that I shall enter into life.

Henry. Continue in this tranquillizing conviction, my dear Antonio.

Antonio. I shall continue in it; of that I am convinced! But—(taking his hand)—listen to the request of a faithful friend.—Give glory again to the Word of God before the world!

Henry. Antonio, if I, like you, do the will of the Lord, am I not then a good Christian? and can I not be as tranquil as you, to whatever Church I may belong?

Antonio. But the will of God also requires of you to renounce error, and publicly to give honour to truth. The Saviour demands such an avowal before the world. "Let your light," he says, (Matt. v. 16.) "so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father that is in heaven." But particularly listen to his very impressive words, St. Matt. x. *32, 33.* "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Oh then, again, acknowledge Jesus, and not his pretended Vicegerent; the Gospel, and not the decrees of councils of Priests; the need of the grace and mercy of God, and not the need of the absolution of men.

Henry. You move my heart, Antonio!—Yes, I will form a determination! I will renounce the fear of man, which has hitherto continued to deter me! I will follow your example, my beloved friend, that I may meet death with a composure like yours.

Antonio. God bless you for this resolution! Then you will tread the right path! Then you will be more faithful and upright than those Pharisees who believed in Christ, but, from fear of men, did not acknowledge him, because, as the Evangelist (John xii. 43.) adds, "they loved the praise of men more than the praise

of God." Then you will be a worthy disciple of the Apostles, who, in the midst of persecutions, adhered to the truth, and at the same time exclaimed, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts v. 29.) Ah! how insignificant is the opinion of men, when we approach the judgment-seat of God! But before this tribunal we stand even in the days of health.

The invalid ceased speaking—he seemed to fall into a slumber.—But when Henry examined him more attentively, he found his countenance covered with the paleness of death.—No respiration—no pulse was perceptible.—Henry was deeply affected, and silently vowed to comply with the last exhortation of his departing friend. He hastened to procure assistance, if there were still a chance of recovery. The physician came; the body was put into a warm bath.—All in vain! It was again laid on the bed, and all felt convinced, that life was extinguished.

But Antonio was only in a slumber. The deep swoon into which he had fallen, was the crisis of the illness. The windows were opened, and the entrance of fresh air rekindled the feeble spark of life. When Henry's father, after some time, visited the supposed corpse, he found an alteration in the features. He examined the body, and it appeared to him to acquire warmth. The physician was again called in, and he employed all the means of art to assist nature. In a few hours the invalid recovered his senses, and soon after, his speech.—He was saved, and, in some weeks, was perfectly restored.

His gratitude towards Henry and his parents knew no bounds. He had before already been much attached to them, but now his heart became entirely devoted to them. Henry's parents too had grown fond of the young man, and they felt themselves much indebted to him, when they heard how strongly he had influenced Henry, to induce him to atone for the step which had so severely afflicted his parents.—Henry's father had just consulted with his wife, on

the means of procuring a useful situation for the young Neapolitan, when Antonio himself requested his advice, with respect to the employment which he should seek in Germany. The old gentleman questioned him on his attainments, and found that he wrote and spoke German and Italian, and had some knowledge of geography, natural history, arithmetic, and French. As he wrote a very good hand, and, what was the chief object, as he had good abilities, and an excellent disposition, he determined to take him as an assistant clerk into his counting-house, and to assign to him a small salary, which should be gradually increased as he became more and more serviceable.

No one was so happy as Antonio. His greatest wish had been to continue with this family, in which he seemed to have found his second parents. He could scarcely await his entrance on his new employment. He devoted every leisure hour to the improvement of his mind, and became daily more useful.

The day on which Henry and he were received into the bosom of the Protestant Church, was a solemn festival for Antonio, and for the whole family. To avoid publicity, this reception had not taken place in the Parish Church, in the presence of the congregation, but in a less frequented Church, and during the week; but, on the following Sunday, both partook publicly of the Holy Communion with the other members of the family. Henry had again resumed his philological studies, to which he was now perfectly reconciled, and prepared himself for a professorship at a high school. To painting, which had proved so seductive to him, he had taken an aversion.

After some time he accidentally found, among his papers, the letters to the Reverend Father N. which he had brought from Italy, and which were to recommend him to a situation. They were now useless to him, and he determined to destroy them. But his father, when he heard this, was of a different opinion, and thought that they deserved at least to be read,

that Henry might form an estimate of the kind intentions of his Italian friends, and of the good fortune which he had now rejected. The curiosity of his mother and Wilhelmina seconded this motion; but Henry, from a certain unaccountable apprehension rather unwillingly acceded to it.

They were opened, and contained nothing but expressions of praise concerning Henry, and the request to promote, in every respect, the worldly success of this believer in Christ. Henry's father was astonished at these cold contents. He examined the letters on every side, to see if nothing concealed could be discovered in them; but in vain. At length it struck him, that the lines were very far apart, and that a whole leaf remained blank. He thought it likely that the paper might contain still another letter, written with sympathetic ink, which would become visible if the paper were dipped into a certain chemical solution. He was well acquainted with this process, and determined instantly to make the trial.

He was not mistaken in his conjecture. When the paper was taken out of the solution, writing, which had before been invisible, appeared, the contents of which were not very agreeable to Henry. His friend Rossi gave to the Catholic Priest, to whom the letter was directed, a very correct picture of Henry's character, particularly of that weakness, by which it was easy to guide him. "Although," he said, among other things, "he is become a Catholic from conviction, yet no secure dependance can be placed upon his conversion, because he has not yet attained to an implicit belief in the decrees of the Church. Besides, early impressions may easily revive, particularly through the influence of his parents, who, according to your account, are zealous Lutherans. The young Italian, whom he has taken under his protection, has, therefore, been instructed to have a vigilant eye upon him: and our worthy Dr. Frederic will do his duty. Still, it will be necessary to remove the young man from

his parents as soon as possible. You will invite him to come to ——; you will make him brilliant promises; you will, imperceptibly, bring him into connexion with such of the faithful as are fitted to watch him; you will, if he should be inclined to apostatize, impress him particularly with the unfavourable light in which he would appear in the eyes of men, an argument which has more influence upon him than all the arguments of truth; you will find means of engaging his heart to a lady who is a member of the Church, and who must be instructed to declare that she can only love a Catholic. You will, in short, use every effort to retain him. For, although he is no great acquisition, and but an indifferent painter, yet the honour of the Church requires us to retain him, and the considerable fortune of his father makes it worth our while to take some pains about his heir. The protegee, a good Catholic, educated in obedience to the Church, you will, by means of spiritual penalties, easily retain in his duty. But how far the terror of spiritual penalties can be applied to the young proselyte, you will regulate according to circumstances; and you will easily form your opinion upon this point by some cautious experiments."

During the perusal of this letter, Henry had alternately turned red and pale. He was at once overpowered with shame at his weakness, and with indignation at this insidious instruction. He saw that Rossi had, unknown to him, held a correspondence concerning him and his parents; he saw, with deep humiliation, of how little importance he himself had been estimated, and that he had only been noticed as the heir of a considerable fortune. But this sense of shame banished from his heart the last remains of vanity, which had so long deterred him from listening to the wishes of his parents and the voice of conviction. But he rejoiced that the letters were only now deciphered, after his recantation had taken place. His father was silent. He saw that this letter required no

comments. His mother smiled at Rossi's mistaken idea of Antonio, and wished that he might hear, to his mortification, how the Gospel had effected more than all the most cautious instructions. Henry informed his parents, that Antonio himself had disclosed to him the instructions which he had received at his last confession in Rome; and this account considerably increased their esteem and confidence in the young man.

But the allusion in the letter to Dr. Frederic, became gradually clear to them, when they compared the various reports which they had heard of this man. No one knew who he was, and whence he came. His manners were polished, his acquirements were considerable, and his conduct was that of a gentleman. But, of late, reports had spread, which rendered him suspicious. As a physician, he had been remarkably attentive to the poor, and it had, therefore, excited no surprise, that some of his patients had afterwards become Roman Catholics. They were poor individuals, whose lives passed unobserved. But it was more striking, that he had attempted to convert a lady of rank; and report would have it, that she had really become a proselyte previous to her death, and had received extreme unction from the Doctor. He had been commended for the exertions he had made to induce the few Roman Catholics in the town to found a Catholic school; but it excited surprise to find that he himself contributed a considerable sum, and nobody knew whence he had obtained it. It was also ascribed to his influence, that the few Roman Catholics of the place, who formerly had often visited Protestant Churches, now strictly abstained from these visits, and drew back from their intercourse with Protestants. A Roman Catholic midwife had also been appointed through his influence, and received a stipend from his private resources. Henry now recollected also, that this man had publicly marked him, in a striking manner, as a Roman Catholic, and had repeatedly invited him to pay a visit to——.

His father deduced from all these circumstances, that this Doctor Frederic must be a proselyte-maker, and, perhaps, even a concealed Jesuit, as this society endeavours now to insinuate itself, under various forms, into all Roman Catholic and Protestant countries.

"I should think, Henry," said his father, at length to him, "that you must feel much relieved, to be delivered from the power of a priesthood, who always surround the members of their Church with a kind of secret police. But the relationship in which our laity stand to their pastors, how worthy is it of the religion of the Spirit, which requires free obedience and faith from conviction! Truth does not require secret watchings and negotiations. It stands firm in its own strength; but error, which is always in danger of perishing from want of foundation, must be supported with difficulty, by police measures, which can only succeed for a time. It is inconceivable to me, how, at the present time, when every state prohibits and abolishes secret societies, the far more secret and more dangerous spiritual orders, and particularly the Jesuits, can still be so countenanced.

Henry. Not only in Rome, but in many other countries, the re-establishment of the Jesuits, and the protection of the power of the priests, are now considered as the most secure props of all religion, and particularly of the Roman Catholic Church; and, on this account, Pope Pius the VIIth. prevailed upon himself to annul the bull of dissolution of his predecessor, and to restore the order. In France, particularly, it is expected that much will be effected by the restoration of power to the priesthood.

Father. It was a daring act of Pius, who must be as infallible as his predecessor, Clement, to cancel his solemn and well weighed bull of dissolution; and I am astonished how, after such an example, a Roman Catholic can still speak, without blushing, of the infallibility of the Popes. But the history of the Popes exhibits much stronger contradictions, which are like-

wise passed over, as if they had never occurred. But the expectation formed of the power of the priesthood, and particularly that of the Jesuits, are without foundation. The more despotic their sway, the more intolerable their yoke will appear to our times, and with the more certainty will they contribute to the extension of the Protestant Church *. For it is the greatest folly to act in the nineteenth century, as if we lived in the fifteenth, and to proceed as if the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, with all its immeasureable changes, had never existed. Such inconsiderate proceedings can only lead to a continuation of the Reformation of the Roman Church.

Henry. They certainly do not think so. The Jesuits also have endeavoured to spread, particularly among high authorities, the opinion, that the French revolution is only a consequence of the dissolution of the Jesuits, and that an absolute priesthood is the firmest support of thrones, and the most efficacious remedy against the *constitution fever* of the people.

Father. But how can they persuade any body of this, who has the least knowledge of history? Frederic the Great foretels the French revolution in his works, and assigns the distracted state of the finances, and the corruption of the higher ranks, as its causes. To these he might have added, the vicinity of England and its Parliament, the influence of North America, and, beyond all, the great mass of internal abuses. Whoever wishes to understand the French revolution, has only to read the popular Memoirs of the Times of Louis the XIVth, XVth, and XVIth, which involuntarily give the deepest insight into the state of the court, the courtiers, and the higher ranks.

* The effects produced by the renewed power of the priesthood in France, are evident from the expressions of General Sebastiani, deputy of Corsica, in his speech in the Chamber of Deputies, the 26th of February, 1827. "Already," he exclaimed,—"already desertions (from the Roman Church) become numerous; already more than 3,000 individuals have, in the neighbourhood of Lyons, gone over to the Protestant communion!"—This assertion was not contradicted in the Chambers.

But, as far as regards the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, since the beginning of the Papal power, the annals of all the western kingdoms are full of accounts of the most dangerous conflicts, which they have carried on against the Sovereigns *. Many princes only maintained themselves on their thrones with the greatest difficulty; others were actually deposed by the priests. And how could it be otherwise! In the Protestant Church the sovereign is the supreme head of the Church, and Church and State are, therefore, bound in the closest union. In Russia, too, the Emperor is also Patriarch of the Greek Church in his empire; but the Roman clergy are bound in implicit obedience to a foreign monarch, the sovereign of the State of the Church, and thus form a State within a State. The Catholic princes have, therefore, always much to endure from their clergy, who, under the protection of the Pope, form a ready and often successful opposition to them. Moreover, these clergy have this advantage over the Greek and the Protestant, that the highly venerated order of the Jesuits, belonging to the holy priesthood, has alone, among all Christian priests, taken regicide, and the right of revolting, under its protection.—Is, then, all this experience perfectly lost?

Henry. Some people seem never to profit by experience, my dear father!

Father. So it appears! For how could what the enemies of our Church incessantly repeat, be otherwise credited in these days; namely, that the religious liberty of the Protestants begets the spirit of political revolution! Catholic France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, all Catholic America, have revolted since 1790, and have thus proved by facts, that the Catholic priesthood does not protect against revolutions. On the contrary, this priesthood played very active parts in these insurrections. In France, the Catholic vicars (curés),

* See Appendix XIII.

and the inferior clergy, powerfully encouraged the revolution; in Spain and Portugal, they were very numerous among the Cortes. The priesthood of Spain forms, under the name of the apostolical, a very strong party, which makes the utmost exertions to support the king. If our politicians wish to form an estimate of the prosperity of a country where the Catholic priesthood has a full scope to shew its influence, they have only to cast an eye on the state of the Church, and on Spain. But the tranquillity of the Protestant countries, during these agitated times, ought to convince every one of the political inoffensiveness of the Protestant Church. If you wish to see some sterling remarks upon this subject, you ought to read the excellent publication of Doctor Tzshirner, in Leipzig: "Protestantism and Catholicism, considered in a political light." (Leipzig, 1822. Second edition.)

Henry. You know, my dear father, that the system at present adopted in politics, is to preserve every where the established state of things, and to oppose every innovation. But the Reformation is considered as an innovation, and the Roman Church as the established institution, and therefore it is promoted.

Father. Strange confusion of ideas! Which is older, the Gospel or Popery? The Reformers, three hundred years ago, rejected Popery as an innovation, and returned to the Gospel, as the old and established faith. And are not the three hundred years, during which the Protestant Church has existed, sufficient to render it an established Church? If this period were too short to entitle an institution to the venerable name of *established*, then the present political state of Europe would also not be valid, and all ought to be remoulded into the forms previous to the Reformation. At that time there were no standing armies, the German princes were not possessed of sovereign power, there were no absolute monarchies, no fixed taxes, and the boundaries of countries were very differently marked

from what they are now. He who would restore the political world to the state of those times, would justly be considered as a madman. The political state of Europe immediately previous to the great revolution, is still the established model of politics. It should be the same with the Church, and, therefore, the Protestant Church, which has existed three hundred years, ought likewise to be considered as an established institution.

Mother. But I trust that the Protestant subjects of Catholic princes, will never suffer themselves to be seduced to raise disturbances! For then we might, with apparent justice, be reproached with disloyalty.

Father. Do not feel uneasy on that account, my dear. The Protestants in Austria, Hungary, Transylvania, Russia, Bavaria, and Saxony, have always proved themselves loyal subjects, and will continue so, if they be not irritated by severe oppression. But governments are too wise, too just, too Christian, ever to give way to the blind zeal of the priesthood. No nation, I think, will ever revolt, as long as it is governed with justice and mildness. Thus the Catholics, under Non-Catholic Princes, as in Russia, Silesia, of late in the Prussian States, in Wirtemburg, Baden, and Holland, have shewn themselves loyal subjects, although their priests have not always set them the best example.

Mother. But have we no reason to hope, that the Roman Catholics and Protestants may finally unite into *one* Church?

Father. At present this hope is perfectly chimerical. If it should be realized, the Roman Church ought to separate herself from the Pope, to re-establish the Bible in its rights, renounce the infallibility of the priesthood, and the decrees of the Council of Trent; above all, to desist from the unchristian condemnation of all Non-Catholics, and thus, in her internal constitution, to transform herself into a *scriptural* Catholic Church. This, I think, may be anticipated; and I

might even venture to conclude, that such a Church exists already invisibly among Roman Catholics, and will gradually step forward into actual life. The reformation of the Roman Church must begin within her own bosom. Then the Catholics will commit to oblivion their decrees of the Council of Trent, and their Roman Catechism, and the Protestants their books of confessions, and both will raise the Gospel as their standard, and will thence learn to love one another as brethren, to dispense with all decrees of faith, and to tolerate different opinions on faith, without branding each other with the names of heretics and damned. Then true peace will reign, and the words of the prophet will be fulfilled: (Jerem. xxxi. 34.) "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord! For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord!"

Mother. But will this ever take place?

Father. It will take place;—but not during our lives. Meantime, let us honestly contribute our part, in paving the way for such a peace.

Henry. But I should think that, for this end, it would be most desirable, that the Protestant party should lead the way with a good example, and not constantly carry on warfare against the Roman Church by words and writings. For what can be the consequences, but hatred and bitterness, which will only widen the breach between the opponents!

Father. My son, to love our Roman fellow-believers, and to serve them in every respect, is a Christian duty, incumbent upon us. But to love their errors, to justify their abuses, that our duty does not enjoin: this would be obedience to men, eye-service.

Henry. But ought it not to follow from our maxim of liberty of conscience, that we should suffer the Catholic to continue in his belief, and not to contend against him.

Father. You are mistaken. We consider, as our

liberty of conscience, in the first place; that no man, on account of opinions in faith, is liable to civil or spiritual punishments, as was the case among the Roman priesthood, who punished heretics as criminals; and, in the second place, that we permit every one to declare his conviction in matters of religion, and publicly to produce his reasons, which is likewise prohibited by the Roman priesthood. Now, it is natural that we Protestants, while we allow this privilege to others, should avail ourselves of it also. If we permit the Catholic publicly to confess and defend his faith, it would be ridiculous, if we thought ourselves bound to remain silent against him. Jesus did not remain silent against the Pharisees and Scribes.

Henry. There you are right. The Catholics have, therefore, no reason to be displeased with the Protestants, because these express their opinion, and they ought not to feel irritated and offended at their opposition.

Father. The Roman Catholic priesthood would certainly rather have the word to themselves. But they have no reason to complain, while we continue to treat them as foes, to whom we openly shew our weapons. For, since the Reformation, they stand opposed to us in constant warfare. The Pope has, at the very beginning of the Reformation, repeatedly afterwards, and, at last, at the Council of Trent, condemned all Protestant Christians as heretics; he has never revoked this decree of condemnation, and has never acknowledged us as a Church. On the contrary he has, at the peace of Westphalia, (1648), and at the Congress of Vienna, repeatedly protested against the existence of the Protestant Church, and now, at the Jubilee, he imposes it as a duty on all Catholics, to pray, not only for the enlightening of those who are in error, but for the *extirpation of heresy*. Here, then, all the conditions of war are openly announced, and nothing but political power is wanting to carry the *pious* wishes of Rome, for the extirpation of heresy,

into execution. While, therefore, the Protestant Christians are, in Rome, constantly declared as a rebellious multitude of heretics, not to be tolerated, but to be extirpated, while the priests of this Church continually persecute us with the opprobious accusation of revolutionists, who only endeavour to overturn Christianity, shall we be silent, lay the finger on our lips, and act as if we had a bad cause, which we dared not defend?—Yes, I do know such Protestant Christians, who, either from weakness or blindness, or indifference to truth, yield to all the usurpations of the Roman Catholic priesthood, make their humble obeisance to them, speak of truth and error only in half or ambiguous terms; who court the favor of these priests, by whom they are only despised, and who anxiously silence all who attempt to hold up the resplendent shield of truth. This is not to confess the Lord and his Gospel before men; this is not to give glory to God, rather than glory to men. No!—Truth demands, that all who acknowledge her, acknowledge her openly, and defend her against all aspersions. This, Christian charity towards our erring brethren also demands. Therefore, to adhere to truth, to teach, to acknowledge, to defend, truth; let this be the watchword of all upright Christians. But the doctrine of the *Gospel* alone will we acknowledge and defend. We will neither *be*, nor be called, Lutherans, nor Zwinglians, nor Calvinists, but followers of the *Gospel*, that, when we invite Roman Catholics to hear the Gospel, it may not appear as if we called them to come to Luther, Zwinglius, or Calvin. To them they will not come; but to Jesus and the Apostles—I confidently trust!—they *will* come, these they will hear, and to these we will, therefore, hold fast!

Henry, (offering his hand). So be it, father! and nothing in this world shall henceforth induce me to turn from the right path!

Father, (giving him his hand). Then you are com-

pletely restored to me!—Come to my arms, my dear Henry!

Mother. God be praised for this great joy!

Wilhelmina. Oh, Henry, how happy you render your parents!

Henry. But I myself am still the happiest among you! Now, only, my heart is again perfectly calmed; for permanent peace can only be found in *truth.*

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

WHILE I here subjoin a few passages from the Fathers, i. e. from the most celebrated teachers of the Church during the four first centuries, it is necessary that I inform the reader of the object of these quotations. The testimonies of these ancient teachers are not intended to *prove*, in any degree, the doctrines of the Gospel; for the Gospel requires no such testimonies, as the truth of the Church, and of the doctrines proposed by her teachers, rests upon the truth of the Gospel. Nor are these testimonies intended to shew, that the teachers of the four first centuries taught nothing but what is contained in the Gospel, or is conformable to it. For this, in truth, they did not do. But they lived and taught at a time, when there was certainly a Roman Bishop, but, as yet, no Pope—and when the Church had a perfectly different form from the present Roman-Papal hierarchy, and when nothing was known of the many doctrines and customs which have, in later times, been declared absolutely necessary. These quotations are meant to prove, how much the Gospel was still valued in the four first centuries, and how little foundation there is for the pretext, that the Church has taught from the beginning what the Pope and the Council of Trent have since established; and, consequently, how widely different, in many respects, the Roman Church is from the Church of the four first centuries.

To such as are not versed in Ecclesiastical History, the following brief notices of the Fathers, whose opinions are here cited, may be useful.

Clement of Rome, as he is called, a disciple of the Apostle St. Peter, and, finally, Bishop of the Christian Church at Rome. He is said to have died in the beginning of the second century.

Hermas, a disciple of the Apostles, whom St. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Romans, (chap. xvi. 14.) and who has left us a work, under the title of *The Shepherd*, which many, however, ascribe to a later Hermas, who lived about the year 140.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, who bordered upon the time of the Apostle St. John.

Hegesippus, in the latter part of the second century, wrote a history of the Church, a few fragments of which we still possess.

Irenæus, who went from Asia Minor, where he had still heard the contemporaries of the Apostles, to Lyons in Gaul, became a bishop there in the year 177, and is said to have died in 202.

Clement, to distinguish him from Clement of Rome, called Clement of *Alexandria*, was Presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, a teacher of the celebrated catechetical school there, and well acquainted with the Greek philosophy. He is said to have died about the year 220.

The most celebrated of his successors was

Origen, born in the year 185, at Alexandria, died at Tyrus in 254; likewise a Presbyter of Alexandria, superintendent of the school above mentioned, and one of the most copious writers among the fathers.

Tertullian lived in the end of the second and the beginning of the third century; was Presbyter of Carthage in Africa, and one of the most distinguished writers of the early Church. Towards the close of life he became a Montanist.

Cyprian became, in the year 248 or 249, Bishop of Carthage, and died a martyr in 255.

Arnobius, teacher of eloquence at Sicca, in Africa, lived in the beginning of the fourth century.

Lactantius, born in Africa, was first teacher of eloquence in Nicomedia, and was called from thence, in the year 317, to Gaul, to be tutor to the son of Constantine, and he probably died there.

Eusebius became, about the year 314, Bishop of Cæsarea, and was the author of the first Ecclesiastical History, which is still extant.

The so called *Apostolical Constitutions*, or *decrees*, are directions concerning the constitution of the Church, her

liturgy, and the lives of her members, &c. which, it is pretended, were composed by the Apostles. But they are of later origin, and of uncertain date. They contain much that is ancient from the second and third centuries, together with much of a modern date.

THE TESTIMONIES OF THE FATHERS

OF THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES.

I.

Concerning Priestly Absolution.

CLEMENT of Rome makes no mention of a priestly power which can open or shut heaven. In his second Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. iv. 6.) he rather earnestly inculcates the principle, that they only can be saved, who continue in the amendment which they pledged at their baptism; and he adds, in the conclusion of the sixth chapter, * "If we do not preserve baptism pure and undefiled, *on what else can we depend* for admission into the kingdom of heaven? *or who will become our advocate,* (παράκλητος,) *if holy and upright actions be not found in us?*"

Origen, in his Homilies on Numbers, (Homil. xii. §. 6.) says, "If one of us sin, he is rejected (by Christ), although he be not rejected by the Bishop, who may not be acquainted with his offences, or may judge them partially; he is excommunicated by the consciousness of his sins. The favour of man avails such a person nothing, as Christ will not admit such a soul, (being a cast-away) into communion with him †. On the contrary, it may easily happen that a man may be excommunicated by the unjust sentence of a Bishop. But if he be not self-excommunicated, i. e. if he have done nothing to deserve excommunication, *it is no injury to him* (in the eye of Christ) that he appears excommunicated by the unjust judgment of man. And thus

* The translations of the Fathers are made from the German, as the original authorities were not at hand.—M.

† Homil. xiv. §. 3.

it happens that, sometimes, the excommunicated person is still in reality a member of the Church, and he who appears to belong to the Church, is the real excommunicated person."

Tertullian (concerning Chastity, chap. xxi.) denies most strenuously that the Priest has the power of forgiving sins of unchastity, which he declares heinous sins, which God alone can forgive. The Bishop can only forgive lighter offences; but greater ones, God alone. "Produce to me an example, drawn from the Apostles or the Prophets, which assigns to thee the power of forgiving such sins. As only the duty of regulating the discipline has been committed to thee, and thou art not a ruler but a servant, how canst thou arrogate to thyself the right of forgiving sins? On what grounds dost thou ascribe this right to the Church? Is it because the Lord (Matt. xvi.) said to St. Peter, 'On this rock I will build my Church;' or, because he said, 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven?' If on this account thou pretendest that the power of binding and loosing is transmitted to thee also, thou presumest to alter and to destroy the evident meaning of the Lord, who said this *only to St. Peter personally*. Jesus says, 'I will give *thee*,' not, 'I will give the *Church*, the key; and whatsoever *thou*, not *they*, (the Bishops) shalt bind or lose.' The power here delegated to St. Peter referred, not to the heinous sins of believers, (but to unbelievers," as Tertullian had already maintained in the 18th chapter.) "The Church is the spirit, which operates in the spiritual man. *But the Bishops are not the Church; and judgment and decision belong to the Lord, and not to his servant; to God himself, and not to his priest.*"

Cyprian, in his book concerning the fallen, writes, "Let no man deceive or impose upon himself. The Lord alone can exercise mercy. He alone, who bare our sins, whom God offered for our offences, can impart forgiveness of those transgressions which have been committed against God. *Man cannot be greater than God;* and the servant cannot, by virtue of his own absolution, presume to forgive a grievous sin which has been committed against his Lord, and thus add to the guilt of the sinner, by imputing to him ignorance of the declaration, (Jerem. xvii. 5.) 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.'"

II.

What is required to be saved?

HERMAS, in his Shepherd, (book ii. chap. vii.) "Fear God, and you shall live. All who fear Him and obey His commandments, their life is with the Lord; they, who do not obey Him, have not life."

Irenæus, against the Heretics, (book iv. chap. xv. §. 1.) "God has first warned man by the laws of nature, which he implanted in him from the beginning, that is, by the Ten Commandments, *He who does not observe these, cannot be saved.*"

Cyprian, on the Lord's Prayer: "Since the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, is come for the benefit of all, and, collecting learned and unlearned, has given to every sex and age the commandments of salvation; He comprised His commandments within a very small compass, that they, who learnt the heavenly doctrine, might easily commit to memory, and quickly learn, what is necessary for simple belief. When He, therefore, intended to teach *on what the obtainment of eternal life* depends, He reduced the mystery of salvation into the short divine words, (St. John xvii. 3.) 'And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' In the same manner, when He intended to select the first and most important commandment from the Law and the Prophets, He said, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God; and thou shalt love Him with all thy heart, with all thy soul, &c.'"

III. (a)

That it is of no consequence to the truth whether it be old or new.

TERTULLIAN, (concerning virgins taking the veil, chap. i.) "Our Lord Jesus Christ called himself *the Truth*, not *Tradition*. As Christ is eternal and more ancient than all,

so is truth an eternal and ancient thing. Heresies will be known as such, not by their newness, but by the truth. *What is contrary to the truth is a heresy, although it be an ancient usage.*" The same in chap. xvi. "I defend my opinion by Scripture, by nature, and by moral feeling. The Scripture, as well as nature and moral feeling, all proceed from God. *What is contrary to these is not divine.* Should the Scripture be obscure, nature is distinct; should nature be doubtful, moral feeling shews what is acceptable to God."

Arnobius, (against the Heathens, Book II.): "Our cause which we produce (Religion) is new, but it will become old; your's is old, but when it began it was new and strange. The value of a religion is not to be estimated by its antiquity, but by its divinity; (numine); and a man must consider what he worships, not when he began to worship it."

Lactantius, (The instruction concerning Divine Things, book II. chap. viii.) "Since the desire of truth is implanted in all men, those persons renounce the love of truth, who, without any judgment of their own, approve of all the ideas of their forefathers, and, like irrational creatures, suffer themselves to be led by others. What prevents us from following the example of our heathen forefathers, viz. that, as they transmitted to their posterity the falsehood discovered by them, we should, in the same manner, transmit to our posterity the truth, the better part discovered by us."

Cyprian, in his thirty-first Letter: "Some who are compelled to yield to our arguments, in vain oppose usages against us, as if usage had more weight than the truth, or as if, in spiritual things, we were not to follow the better part, which the Holy Spirit reveals." And, in the seventy-fourth letter: "Usage cannot prevent the truth from becoming victorious. For *an usage, which is not true, is an old error.*"

III. (b)

THE Emperor, Constantine the Great, wrote thus (about the year 314 to his prefect in Africa, respecting a dispute

which had arisen concerning Bishop Cæcilian, in Carthage*. "To settle the dispute I have commanded Cæcilian, as well as some of his opponents, to appear personally in Rome. For I had before determined that some Bishops from both Gauls should repair *to my city of Rome*, (ad urbem nostram, Romam), that *both these, and the Bishop of the city of Rome*, might bring the matter to a proper conclusion. These have now informed me of all that has been done in your presence, and laid the acts before me, and have, besides, verbally assured me, that they had decided according to the justice of the case, &c." The same Emperor writes on the same occasion (Mansi, p. 466.) to Bishop Chrestus at Syracuse. "To put an end to these disputes, I had commanded that some Bishops from Gaul, and, together with them, his opponents from Africa, should come (to Rome) that at the same time, in the presence of the Bishop of Rome (præsente *insuper* Romano Episcopo), all that had arisen into dispute might be adjusted in their presence by satisfactory investigation." Constantine the Great summoned, not only the council of Arles, but also one at Carthage, on account of the Donatists, as well as the first general council at Nice, in the year 325. He acted on all occasions as sovereign of the Bishops, and of the Bishop of Rome.

IV.

The Roman Bishops were only equal to other Bishops, who also bore the title *Papa*.

In the Apostolical Decrees, Book VII. Chap. 46, the Bishops, who had succeeded the Apostles themselves, are introduced by name, and the two first Bishops of Rome, Linus and Clemens, stand there without any distinction from the Bishops of other cities. In the Eighth Book, Chap. 10th, it is decreed, "Christians ought to offer prayers for the whole holy Apostolical Church; for all Bishops; for James, Bishop of Jerusalem; for Clement, Bishop of Rome; for Evodius," &c.; where, consequently, the Bishop of Rome stands in the same class as the other Bishops, and is placed after the Bishop of Jerusalem.

* See the decrees of the Council of Mansi, vol. ii. p. 463.

The Bishops of the Council of Arles, in the year 314, gave to the Roman Bishop, who was not at the Council, an account of their Resolutions, in a letter (Mansi, Vol. II. p. 469.) wherein they say, "Adhering faithfully to the common bond of brotherhood, and to the unity of our Mother, the National Church, we, who at the *command* of the Emperor, assembled at the city of Arles, greet you, praiseworthy Father (Papa) with due reverence. For it seemed good to us (placuit), that all should be informed of our Resolutions, by means of thee, and through thee, who hast a larger diocese."

The letters of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and his correspondence with the Roman Bishops, are peculiarly important. The Roman Clergy give to Cyprian, the title Papa, (for instance, in the 30th and 31st Letters,) and say in a Letter (the 2d) to the clergy of Carthage, "We have heard that the blessed Papa (Pope) Cyprian is dead." Cyprian, in his Letters, (the 3d and 52d) to the Bishop of Rome, not only calls him his *colleague*, but treats him throughout only as a colleague, and not as a superior. The most important parts of his correspondence with Rome, the genuineness of which is unquestionable, are, perhaps, the following. He writes, in the 29th Letter to the Clergy of Rome, "Mutual regard, as well as our relationship, demand that we conceal from you nothing that we undertake, that, in what regards the interest of the Church, we may form common resolutions." The *Roman Clergy* answer thereupon (Letter 13th), "Thou hast acted in thy usual manner, in acquainting us with a matter which excites apprehension. *It is incumbent upon us all* to provide for the body of the whole Church, the members of which are dispersed over different provinces." The Roman Clergy write further (Letter 31st) to Cyprian, "Although an honest mind is satisfied with the approbation of God, and neither seeks the praise of others, nor fears their censure, those, however, deserve a double praise, who, while they are conscious *that they are only responsible to the judgment of God*, wish, however, to see their actions *approved* by their brethren. That thou, dear brother Cyprian, dost this, is not to be wondered at, since, according to thy natural modesty and care, thou considerest us not only as *judges*, but rather as *partakers* of thy resolutions, *that we*,

by approving of what thou dost, may gain praise, and become heirs of thy good counsels, because we assent to them. For that will be considered as our common work, in which we shall be found united by uniformity of judgment and of discipline." Cyprian, in his 52d Letter, after he has said, that he has assembled a Council of the African Bishops, to determine the dispute concerning the fallen, proceeds, "Should the number of the African Bishops not appear sufficient, I have also written on the subject to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, *my colleague*, who has also himself, together with several Co-Bishops, approved of my opinion at a Council, which they held." Whilst he invited Stephanus, Bishop of Rome, to accede to the Resolutions of the African Bishops, he writes to him, in the 72d Letter, "I have informed thee of this, beloved brother, partly *on account of our common office* (pro honore communi), partly *out of sincere love*, whilst I believe, that what is equally pious and true will, on account of the sincerity of thy piety and faith, be agreeable to thee also. In other respects, since I know that many persist in their opinion, and without breaking, however, the bond of unity and peace among their colleagues, wish to abide by the usages of their Churches, I will offer violence to no man, nor give a prescription, *as every Bishop in the administration of the Church, is at liberty to follow his own free judgment, since he must give account of his actions to the Lord.*" At the Council of Carthage, in the year 256, when the Bishops of the provinces of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, were assembled, Cyprian, who directed the Council, says, that he wishes not to urge his opinion upon any man, and adds, "For none of us makes himself a Bishop of Bishops, or constrains his colleagues, by tyrannical terrors, to a forced obedience, since every Bishop, according to his own freedom and power, is at liberty to form his own conviction, and can be as little judged by another, as he can himself pass judgment upon others. We all rather wait for the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, exclusively and alone, has the power as well of committing to us the government of the Church, as of judging our actions."

V.

St. Matt. xvi. 18. *St. John* xx. 23.

ORIGEN (Commentary on Matthew, Tom. XII. 10.) makes the following remarks on the words, "*Thou art Peter*," &c. "Every disciple of Christ is a rock, and the whole doctrine of the Church, and the general constitution of it, conformable to this doctrine, is built upon such a rock. But if you would believe that the whole Church of Christ is built upon *Peter alone* exclusively, what will you say of St. John, or of any other Apostle? Or can any one maintain that the gates of hell were only not too strong for St. Peter, but were stronger than the other Apostles, and the pious? Are not the words, 'And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' said *to all and every one?* as well as the words, 'On this rock I will build my Church?' Have the keys of the kingdom of heaven been given to St. Peter, so that none of the other Bishops have received them? But if the words, 'I will give thee the kingdom of heaven,' refer to all, (see St. Matt. xviii. 18.) why not the preceding words also, which appear to have been spoken only to St. Peter?" He, therefore, maintains that every one that is qualified, as St. Peter was, is a spiritual Peter, and that the words of Jesus refer to him also.

Tertullian, see the remarkable passage under I.

Cyprian refers the words, "Thou art Peter," &c. to the founding of the episcopal dignity in general, and says, in the 27th Letter, "Our Lord, whilst he founds the *episcopal office* in the Church, says (St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19.) to St. Peter, 'and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter,' &c. Hence is derived, by means of succession, in the course of time, the appointment of Bishops and the regulations of the Church, so that the Church is founded upon *Bishops*, (super episcopos); and all ecclesiastical affairs are conducted by them as superintendents." In his work, concerning the unity of the Church, where he especially endeavours to prove that the clergy, subject to the Bishops, cannot separate themselves from him, because the episcopal office, on which the Church rests, is only one and the same, he seeks to prove the unity of the episcopal office on the

ground, that it has originated with *one*, namely, St. Peter; for although he conferred afterwards the same office on all the Apostles, it was, however, first imparted to St. Peter; so that the episcopal authority has sprung originally from an unity. The remarkable, and often misinterpreted words of Cyprian, are, "The Lord says to St. Peter, (St. Matt. xvi. 18.) '*And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock*," &c. In the same manner he says to him, after his resurrection, (St. John xxi. 15. 17.) '*Feed my lambs.*' On this *one*, (super illum bonum,) he builds, and him he entrusts to feed his lambs; and, although after his resurrection, he *bestowed an equal power on all the Apostles*, and says, (St. John xx.) 'As the Father hath sent me, so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosesoever sins ye remit,' &c. He has, however, to shew the unity of the episcopal office, ordained, agreeably to his power, that the *origin* of this unity should begin with one, (unitatis ejusdem originem ab uno incipientem sua auctoritate disposuit.) *What St. Peter was, the other Apostles were, certainly also participators of the same employment, the same honour, and the same power*, but the *beginning* was with one, and the *honour* of the *beginning* was given to St. Peter, to shew that the Church of Jesus is one, and that the episcopal office ought to be only one," (hoc erant utique et cæteri Apostoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis, sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur, et primatus Petro datur, ut una Christi ecclesia et cathedra una monstretur). The words *Primatus Petro datur*, can never be considered in that connexion, that St. Peter obtained dominion over the other Apostles, but only that he was *first* named Bishop among them, and the others after him. This the passage, introduced under No. VI., from the 71st Letter, shews also incontestably.

VI.

That St. Peter was not supreme lord of the other Apostles, is evident not only from the passages of Origen and Cyprian, introduced under No. V., but also from other declarations of the Fathers.

Origen (Homilies on Exod. Hom. IX. §. 3.) compares

the Christian Church with the Tabernacle, and says, "the pillars of the Church are the teachers and servants, of whom St. Paul says, (Gal. ii. 9.) '*James, Cephas*, and *John*,' who seemed pillars; but the *head* of the pillars is He, of whom the Apostle (1 Cor. xi. 3.) says, 'The head of man is *Christ*.' The same (Origen) in his Third Homily on Numbers, calls St. Paul, *the greatest of the Apostles*."

Clement of Alexandria, (as we learn from Eusebius, Eccles. Hist. Book II. Chap. I.) *Peter, James*, and *John*, highly as they had been honoured by the Lord, did not, after his ascension, contend for the place of honour, but elected James the Just, as Bishop of Jerusalem.

In the Apostolical decrees, St. Peter stands, without distinction, in the rank of the other Apostles; and these (Book VII. Chap. II.) speak of him as our *Co-Apostle*, Peter. Cyprian, in the 71st Letter, writes, "Peter also, although the Lord chose him first, and built upon him his Church, when St. Paul afterwards contended with him concerning circumcision, (see Gal. ii. 11.) made no proud or arrogant claims, so as to say, that he was *first* appointed, (se primatum tenere), and that they who were later, and more recently called, were to obey him."

VII.

That the primacy in the Church was not given to the Bishop of Rome, after the death of all the Apostles, is seen from some passages of ancient writers of the Church, which have been introduced by *Eusebius* into his Eccles. Hist. The passages are these. Hegessippus, who lived towards the middle of the second century, writes, (as we learn from Eusebius, Book II. 23.) "James, the brother of the Lord, who was by all surnamed the Just, received the Church after the Apostles," (*διαδέχεται τὴν ἐκκλησίαν μετὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων*). Eusebius, (Eccles. Hist. III. 20.) relates, "There were still existing in the time of the emperor Domitian, some of the relations of Jesus, grand-sons of Judas, the brother of Jesus, whom Domitian summoned before him, but again dismissed, as they were harmless men, without property. *After their dismissal, they are*

said to have presided over the Churches, and they were at once martyrs and relations of Jesus." Of the same relations of Jesus, it is said in Eusebius, (III. 32.) "They preside over the Church, as martyrs, and because they are of the family of the Lord." How could the kinsmen of the Lord have been thus considered, if St. Peter had been supreme head of the Apostles, and had, as the Roman Church maintains, transmitted his supremacy to the Bishops of Rome?

VIII.

No compulsion in matters of faith.

TERTULLIAN, (in Scapula), "Every man, according to human right and natural liberty, is allowed to worship what he considers as divine; the religion of one man neither promotes nor impedes that of another. But it is not conformable to religion, to wish to force it, as it must be received voluntarily, and not by coercion."

Lactantius, (Instructions concerning Divine Things, Book V. Chap. 20.) "There is no need of violence or injustice, since religion cannot be forced. With *words*, and not with *blows*, the matter is to be carried on, that it may be received voluntarily. They (the heathens) prefer to use the sagacity of their understanding, and when they have right reasons, to produce them. When they wish to teach, we are ready to hear; when they are silent, we do not believe them; and when they rage, we do not yield."

IX.

Priests ought not to be Rulers.

ORIGEN, in his Sixteenth Homily on Genesis, chap. v. says, in explanation of the passage, (Genes. xlvii. 22.) "Do you wish to know the difference between the priests of Pharaoh and the priests of God? Pharaoh gave land to his priests, but the Lord gave no land to his priests as their portion, but said, (Numb. xviii. 20.) 'I am thy part and thine inheritance.' Remember this difference all ye priests of the Lord, that you may not appear to be more

the priests of Pharaoh than the priests of the Lord, if you possess land, and attend to worldly employments. Pharaoh wills that his priests should possess land, and be more intent upon the cultivation of the land than upon the care of the soul, more intent upon the field than upon the laws. But Christ (St. Luke xiv. 33.) says to his priests, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple,'" The same, in his Sixth Homily on Isaiah, §. 61. "He who is called to be a Bishop, is not called to the dominion, but to the service, of the Church." The same, in his Comment. on Matt. §. 61. "Every Bishop who does not minister as a servant with his co-brethren, but is a ruler over them, sins against God." The same, in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, Book IX. Chap. 3. "He who presides over his brethren, or the Church, ought not to charge himself with the care of human disputes and earthly things."

X.

The free use of the Holy Scriptures.

Origen (Homil. on Jerem. iv. 6.) exhorts to the perusal of the Scriptures, as the most effectual means of moral improvement. "True amendment is (that is, takes place through,) the perusal of the Old Testament, meditation upon, and imitation of, the just; the perusal of the writings of the New Testament, and of the words of the Apostles, which a man, after perusal, must inscribe on his own heart, and live accordingly, &c."

Cyprian (concerning spectacles) exhorts Christians to witness rather the great spectacles of God, than the spectacles of the heathens. "The faithful Christian must especially ponder over the Holy Scriptures, where he will find worthy examples of faith."

Pamphilus, the friend and contemporary of Eusebius, is commended by Hieronymus (Apol. I. against Ruffin) "that he readily distributed the Holy Scriptures, not only to men but to women, whom he saw eager to read them, that they might not only peruse, but retain them."

The Emperor Julian, who apostatised from Christianity, made it (according to Cyrillus Alexander, VI. 9.) a re-

proach to the Christians, that they "permitted women and children to read the Holy Scriptures."

XI.

Traditions.

THE most ancient Fathers certainly set a value upon what the Apostles had verbally taught in the earliest congregations, because their writings were only gradually committed to writing, and could not, at first, partly on account of the distance of the congregations, partly on account of the expense of transcribing, be every where easily procured. But when the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles had been more and more spread, and collected in the second century, and the collection of those writings which we now know under the name of the New Testament, had been formed, they set the highest value upon these, as the authentic sources of the knowledge of the doctrines of Jesus and his Apostles, and were far from thinking that the traditions could contain any thing else than is found in the writings of the Evangelists and the Apostles. We learn from their expressions, that the traditions were not only in the course of time become uncertain, and that heretics also referred to them in defence of their errors, but that the Fathers judged of the truth of traditions by Scripture, as the surest touchstone.

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, in the beginning of the second century, wrote five books, which are now lost, concerning the explanation of the doctrines of Jesus. But Eusebius relates, that Papias had said therein, that he had received from the verbal instruction of Apostolical men, all that he had committed to writing, whilst his only inquiry had been, what John, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, and Matthew, had taught. This was, therefore, the most ancient testimony to tradition. In the same manner, Eusebius (in his Eccles. Hist. III. in the last chapter,) says of Papias, "This compiler mentions many other things, as if they had come by verbal tradition to him, some *strange* similes and aphorisms of the Saviour, and *some things which are too fabulous.*"

We learn from Irenæus, (Adv. Hær. V.) that there was a dispute between the Roman and Asiatic Churches, concerning the length of the fasts, when the former referred to the traditions received from St. Peter and St. Paul, and the latter to those from St. John. Irenæus certainly set a great value upon verbal traditions; but he says, however, against the heretics, (Book III. Chap. 1. §. 1.) "We have learned to know the plan of our salvation through no others than those by whom the Gospel is come unto us, who certainly, at that time, (at first) announced it orally as heralds to us, but afterwards, according to the will of God, committed the same to writing *for us* (nobis), *that it might be the ground and pillar of our faith.*"

He relates the composition of the Four Gospels, and proceeds, "He who does not receive these writings, despises the companions of our Lord (participes Domini), despises Christ, which all heretics do." And in the same manner, (Chap. 4. §. 1.) he says, "If a dispute arise concerning a trifling question, ought we not to return to the most ancient Churches, where the Apostles lived, and receive from them the truth in such a case? *But if the Apostles had not left their writings to us*, ought we not then to have followed the oral traditions, which they left to the Churches where they taught?" Irenæus here evidently prefers their writings to their traditions.

Origen, (Second Homily on Ezek. §. 2.) "*Hear the heretics, how they maintain* that they have received the tradition (traditionem) of the Apostles. But if a thousand men should consider my words as true, and they should be false, according to a precept of God, (contained in the Scriptures), what would it avail me? *My inquiry ought to be, that the Lord stands by me as a witness of my doctrines, that he confirms, by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, what I here advance.*"

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, had, in conjunction with the African Bishops, decreed at a council, that the Christians baptized by heretical sects, ought to be baptized anew, when they turned to the general Church, as the baptism of heretics was invalid. He communicated this decree to Stephanus, Bishop of Rome, who did not approve of it, but maintained the validity of baptism by heretics, and referred to traditions on this point. He had

asserted against Cyprian the principle, "That nothing new ought to be started if it be not contained in the traditions," (nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum est.) On this point Cyprian expresses himself in the seventy-fourth letter:—"Where then does this tradition originate? From the authority of the Lord and the Gospel, or from the commands and the Epistles of the Apostles? For God himself (Josh. i. 8.) testifies, that *only what is written should take place.* If, either in the Evangelists, or in the Epistles of the Apostles, or in the Acts, it be either commanded or contained, not to baptize those that come from heretical sects, but only to lay hands on them, then such a divine and sacred tradition ought to be observed. But it is obstinacy and prejudice to prefer a human tradition to a divine command. If we go to the source and origin of divine traditions, (that is, to the Scriptures) human error gives way. If a canal, flowing abundantly at its source, should suddenly stop, do not men go back to the source to discover the cause of the stoppage? This the priests ought to do also now, (in this dispute,) viz. if the truth, in a certain point, be doubtful and wavering, we ought to return to the source, which originates from the Lord, (ad originem dominicam,) and to the (written) doctrines of the Evangelists and Apostles." On the same subject Tertullian writes, concerning Stephanus, (letter seventy-five): "As to the pretext of Stephanus, that the Apostles have orally given the prohibition not to baptize those that come from heretics, you answer quite right when you say, *Let no one be so foolish as to believe this.* That they in Rome do not observe all that has been taught, and refer in vain to the authority of the Apostles, may be deduced hence, *that they have different opinions concerning the solemnization of Easter, and many other mysteries of religion,* and do not observe every thing in the same manner as it is done at Jerusalem."

XII.

The withdrawal of the cup.

There is no trace to be found in the early Church, that any hesitation was made with regard to the giving of the cup; but rather, its distribution is every where mentioned.

The so called "Apostolical Decrees," which are, however, of a later origin, rather ordain * the communion service in the following form: "Let the Bishop present the offering (the bread) and say, *The body of Christ!* and let the communicant say, *Amen!* Let the deacon take the cup, and whilst he presents it, let him say, *The blood of Christ, the cup of life!* and let him that drinks it say, *Amen!*"

The reverence of the Fathers for the institution of Christ was so great, that they declared it highly improper that some did not mix wine with water, but presented water alone in the cup. Cyprian writes on this subject in the sixty-third letter. "Thou knowest that, in presenting the cup, we are bound to follow the direction of the Lord, and to do nothing differently from what he has at first done, viz. to present wine mixed with water. St. Paul, in another passage, (Gal. i. 6, 8.) teaches us very impressively, that *we must absolutely not deviate from the prescriptions of the Gospel,* and that the disciple must observe and do all that his Master taught and did. Since, therefore, neither the Apostle nor an Angel from heaven dared to teach or preach otherwise, than as Christ and the Apostles had once preached, it is a matter of surprise, that, in some places, contrary to the Evangelical and Apostolical institution, water is presented in the cup of the Lord. For if, in the sacrifice offered by Christ, we ought to follow him alone, so we ought to observe and do all that Jesus has done and commanded us to observe. For we *must follow divine truth, and not the custom of man. If* (according to St. Matthew v. 9.) *it be not allowed to break the least divine commandment, how much more is it our duty not to violate what belongs to so great a mystery, and has reference to the sufferings of the Lord and our salvation, nor to alter it in any degree, by human tradition, from its divine appointment!*"

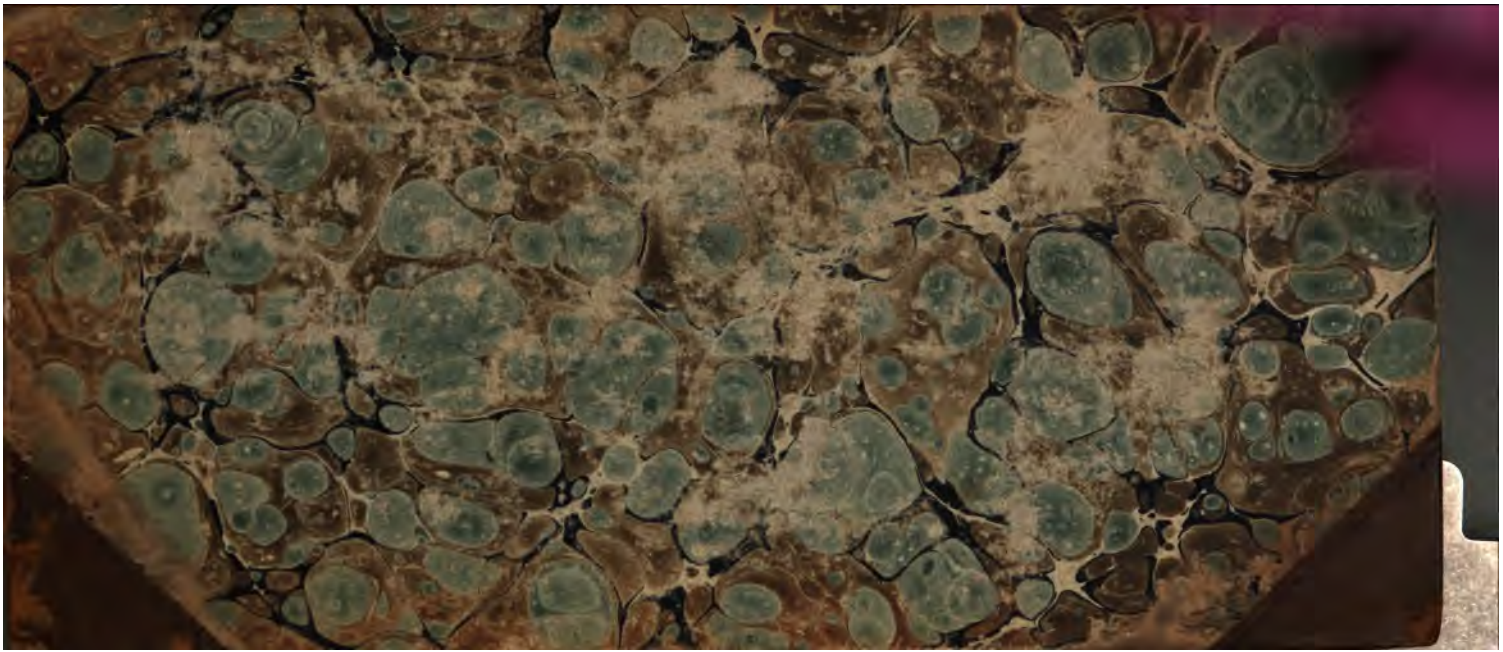
XIII.

Cardinal Bellarmine enumerates eighteen Popes who have attempted the dethronement of temporal sovereigns.

* Book viii. chap. xiii.

In the glossaries on the Papal decrees, the most exaggerated representations are given of the Papal power. Glossa in cap. ii. c. 15. quest. 6. it is said, "The Pope can give a dispensation contrary to the *Gospel*, to the Apostles, and to the *right of nature*." The glossa on Can. iii. tit. 7. lib. 1. decret. Gregor. IX. says, "The only cause which a man has to assign for what the Pope does, is, *because it is his will*. And who will be so audacious as to presume to say to him, 'Why dost thou act thus?' Since he is raised above all right, he can give dispensations for every thing. He can make *injustice itself* just, and alter and abolish all decrees of empire *at pleasure*." The glossa on cap. iv. Extravag. Joann. XXII. de verbor. signific. says, "Whosoever will dare to maintain, that *the Lord our God, the Pope*, the author of these decrees, has not the power to enact them, is to be considered a heretic." They were afterwards ashamed of these blasphemous words, "the Lord our God," and omitted them; but they are still to be found in the more ancient editions; for instance, in those which appeared at Lyons in 1584 and 1606, and in the Paris editions, 1585, 1601, 1612. Pope Gregory VII. declared the German Emperor, Henry IV. deposed, and he was obliged to appear as a penitent before him. Pope Innocent IV. as the vicegerent of God, pronounced, at the council of Lyons (1245) the ban on the Emperor Frederic II. declared him deposed, and absolved all his subjects from their oaths of allegiance. Pope Hadrian the IVth. gave to Henry the IInd of England, permission to conquer Ireland, on condition that the head of each house should pay to Rome a yearly tribute. Pope Innocent the IIIrd. absolved the English from their oaths of allegiance to king John, made a present of England to France; and John was obliged to purchase the favour of the Pope by promising to send annually to Rome a thousand marks, as a tribute for England and Ireland. The Popes have availed themselves of the principle established by themselves, "that the Pope is the sole Bishop of the Church, and, consequently, that all church property belongs to him," in order to impose tribute in various ways upon all the countries of the west. They removed the monasteries from the superintendence of the Bishops, and, on condition of receiving a considerable sum from these institutions, took them

under their own protection. They maintained that they alone had the right to instal Bishops, and levied large sums, especially in Germany, (called the pallia-money) upon the newly-installed Bishops. But they did not stop here. Pope John the XXth appropriated to the Pope one year's income of every ecclesiastical vacancy, (annates). Another Pope, Paul the IInd. commanded (in 1470) that the income of every ecclesiastical place, should, every fifteenth year, be delivered into the Papal treasury, which was called *Quindenium*. They further claimed the income of all ecclesiastical places whilst vacant, and the right of becoming the heirs of all deceased ecclesiastics. The sale of indulgences produced the most important gain. Not satisfied with what was solicited from them, they frequently sent tickets of indulgences into different countries, especially into Germany, for a particular traffic. The Jubilee, instituted by Boniface the VIIIth, in 1301, (for which he took pretext from Levit. chap. xxv.) at which a plenary absolution was given to all pilgrims who visited Rome, proved also a source of great wealth. It was to be celebrated only every hundred years; but it became so profitable, that this interval was found far too long. Pope Clement the VIth, therefore, (1350), ordained that it should be celebrated every fifty years. Pope Urban the VIth fixed it on the thirty-third year of every century, (because Christ had lived thirty-three years). But Paul the IInd. commanded it to be celebrated every five and twentieth year: in addition to which, Boniface the IXth (1390) decreed, that plenary absolution should be received by all who would send to Rome a sum equal to the expences of a pilgrimage thither. None were more weary of these endless extortions than the German Princes. They did not cease to give vent to their grievances (the gravamina Germanicæ nationis) and to urge for redress; *but it was all in vain. They were obliged to endure these extortions, till the Reformation put an end to them.*

THE END.

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